

6.

JESUS *seen of ANGELS;*

AM

A N D

A

GOD's *Mindfullness of MAN.*

CONSIDERED

In Three DISCOURSES:

The SUBSTANCE of which was preach'd, in the
Parish Church of *Broad Hembury, Devon,*
on Tuesday, December 25, 1770.

By AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, A. B.

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L O N D O N:

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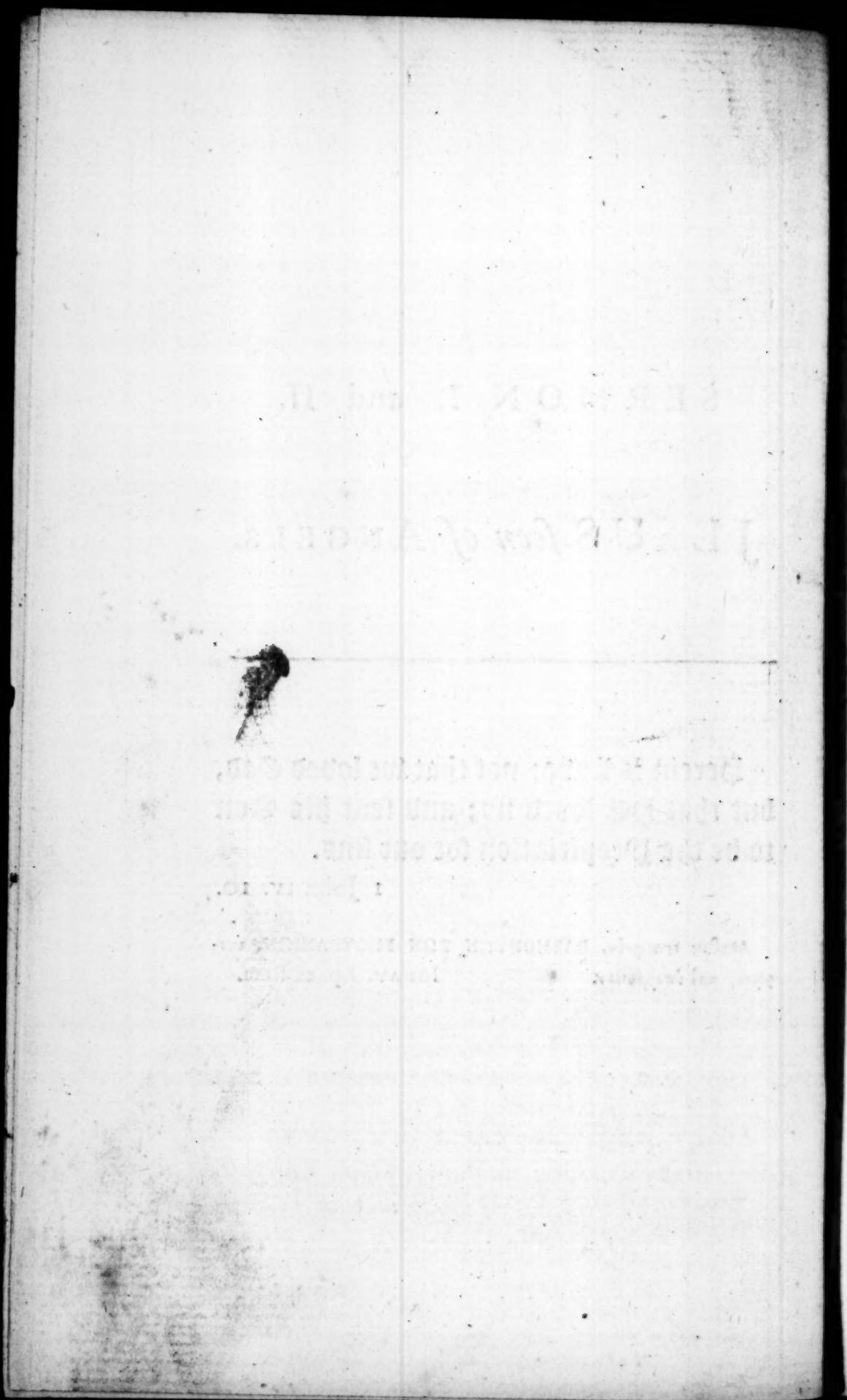
S E R M O N I. and II.

J E S U S *seen of Angels.*

Herein is Love: not that we loved God,
but that HE loved us; and sent his Son
to be the Propitiation for our sins.

i John iv. 10.

Αληθῶς εγενέρθη, ΒΛΕΠΟΝΤΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΠΟΤΡΑΝΙΩΝ, επι-
γείων, καὶ ὑποχθονῶν. • IGNAT. Ep. ad Rom.



1 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

— Seen of Angels. —

WITHIN the Compass of this single Verse, St. Paul comprises several fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith. The whole Passage, so far as it extends, may be considered as a little System of Divinity; and literally deserves the name of *the Apostle's Creed*. And such Compendiums as This, of which there are many in Holy Scripture, seem to have given the first Hint, at least, to the Primitive Churches, of declaring their Attachment to Jesus and His Gospel, in set *Formularys* and *Confessions of Faith*.

Indeed, the Apostle himself appears to intimate something of this Kind, when, writing to the *Romans*, he told them, *Ye have, from the Heart, submitted to that Mold, or Model of Doctrine, into which*

*ye were delivered**. So, likewise in his Second Epistle to *Timothy*, he thus directs that young Divine ;

* *Rom.* vi. 17. Υπηκοστάς δε εκ καρδίας εις ὃν παρεδόθη τύπος της δίδαχτης. In allusion, either to softened *Wax*, which implicitly admits the Impression of the Stamp; or to *Metals*, reduced to a State of Fusibility, which assimilate themselves to the Figure of the Mold, into which they are cast.—The acute and learned Author of *The Confessional* seems very unwilling to admit the Probability of St. Paul's referring to any *fixed Formulary* of Doctrine, either in the Passage last cited, or in the correspondent ones of *1 Tim.* iv. 6. *1 Tim.* vi. 3. and *2 Tim.* i. 13. Let us hear this able Writer speak for Himself. “ The Greek “ Words, in these several Passages which are *supposed* to signify “ this Standard or *fixed Formulary*, runs thus: Τυπῷ δίδαχτης “ — ‘ Υποτυπωσίς ὑπαινούντων λογών — Δοξοὶ πιστῶς καὶ καλῆς “ δίδασκαλίας — ‘ Υπαινούτες λογοί ὡς τὰ κυρια ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ “ ἡ κατ’ εὐσεβειαν δίδασκαλία. Now, when a *capable* and *unprejudiced* Reader considers the *Variety of Expression*, in these several Passages, he will probably be inclined to think, “ that a *fixed Formulary* of Doctrine is the last Thing a plain “ Man would look for in them. A *fixed Formulary*, one would “ think, should have a *fixed Title*. Nor is it at all probable, “ that one and the same Form of Words should be described, “ in Terms, which may denote an Hundred different Forms.” *Confessional*, p. 95, 96. 3d. Edit.

1. It matters very little, whether the Apostolic Formularys, delivered to different persons, were *syllabically*, and *verbatim*, one and the same, or not. Their being *materially*, and *substantially* the same, as to their *Sense* and *Meaning*, was sufficient to secure the Point aimed at, viz. *Unity of Doctrine*. The *Variety of Titles*, therefore, assigned to these *fixed Formularys* (for Such there seem to have been), is, in Reality, no Objection to the *Doctrinal Unity* of the Formularys themselves, supposing them to have been ever so numerous. But, 2. After all, there is no necessity for admitting even a *verbal Diversity* of

vine; Hold fast the Form of Sound Words, which thou hast heard of ME †: where the ὑποτυπωσις ὑπαινοῦσα
 λογων,

of Apostolic Standards; at least of Those drawn up by one and the same Apostle. Those, for Instance, given by St. Paul, were, in all Probability, not only *materially*, but *verbally*, alike. Whoever considers this Apostle's masterly *Command* of the *Copious Language*, in which He wrote; will hardly, I should imagine, be surprized at the *Variety of Titles*, given, in different Parts of his Epistles, to, perhaps, *one and the same Summary*: especially, as those various Titles are all *coincident in Sense*, and, one as well as another, strictly compatible with a *fixed Apostolic Formulary*. Thus, for Example, the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England may be termed (I mean, by the Few who believe them) Τύπος διδαχης, Ὑποτυπωσις ὑπαινοῦσα λογων, Λογος πιστως, &c. and yet remain the same *identical Articles*, under all this *Variety of Titles*.

But the *Confessionalist* is inclined to believe, that, in Rom. vi. 17. τύπος διδαχης is, in particular, a Phrase “ ABSOLUTELY UNINTELLIGIBLE,” if not referred to “ the Example or *emplification* of the Christian Doctrine, in the Practice of “ pious Believers.” If, however, we read the Apostle's Words, through the Medium of the *Metaphor* to which he (I think, plainly) alludes; the *absolute unintelligibility*, of which the learned Writer seems apprehensive, vanishes at once; and a Sense arises (not very favorable, indeed, to the main Hypothesis of the *Confessional*, but) *proper in itself, unforced* in it's Deduction, and *very intelligible* by All. A Sense, too, which is, at least, *extremely probable* to have been *that* the eloquent Apostle intended to convey; as his admirable Compositions very frequently derive both Ornament, Strength, and Perspicuity, from the Adhibition of *Imagery* and *Allusion*: in which he greatly dealt, and as greatly excelled.—I have the Satisfaction to find my Argument confirmed, by the Suffrage

† 2 Tim. i. 13.

λογιών, i. e. the *Copy, Pattern, or Outline of Sound Doctrines*, mentioned by the Apostle, strongly seems to refer to some *Elementary Sketch, or Summary of Principles*, previously given to *Timothy*, as a Rule by which to proceede, in the Doctrines he should publicly deliver as a Preacher.—So very far are, what have been since called, *Creeds* and *Articles of Faith*, from being contrary, as Such, either to the Letter, or to the Spirit of the *Gospel*.

of a very respectable Commentator, whose Learning no Man, I believe, who has any Learning himself, will venture to contest. He observes, that “ The Word *δεῖσις*, which is the same with *τύπος* here, is used, by the Jewish Writers, for “ a *Form, Copy, or Exemplar*, of any Sort of *Writings*.” Dr. GILL on *Rom.* vi. 17. Every one knows that even our common *Lexicons* interpret *τύπος* by *Formula, Norma, Institutum*.—SCAPULA, particularly, intimates, that *τύπος* sometimes signifys *a Compendium*: for which he cites That Passage of Aristotle, *τυπω τ' αληθες ενδεικνυσθαι*. and this of Theophrast, *τυπω και ἀπλως ειπεσθαι*.—I should extend this Note beyond all reasonable Bounds, were I to pursue the Argument farther. I shall, therefore, only add, that the very particular Notice, which the Author of the *Confessional* has condescended to take of me, for some Pages together, in the last Edition of his celebrated Work; above all, the Charge of flagrant *Inconsistency* with myself, in my Defence of *Subscription to fixed Formularys*; have brought me pretty deeply into this Writer’s *Debt*: and, if my many Avocations will give me leave, I design to embrace the first opportunity of, coolly and respectfully, *balancing Accounts* with this able Combatant of *Creeds*; whose Talents I revere, at the same time that I deplore their mis-application.

The

The *Expedience*, *Propriety*, and even *Necessity* of These, appear, among other Considerations, from hence ; that, without some given Model, or determinate *Plan* of Doctrine, deduced from the Sacred Scriptures, it will be impossible, either for Ministers or People, to form *just* and *connected* Ideas of Divine Things. Unless the Pearls, which are scattered at large in the Gospel-Field, be marshalled into some Kind of *Order*, and reduced in a regular Chain ; we can never preach, as the Apostle directs, according to the *Analogy of the Faith** : i. e. in exact Agreement with that nice *Connection* and mutual *Relation*, which the several Doctrines of Faith have in common with each other ; so as to make, of the Whole, one consistent, uniform, unclashing System : Like an Instrument of *Music*, in perfect Tune, without one discordant String ; or, like a consummate *Picture*, wherein every Stroke is correlative, and Symmetry and just Proportion reign throughout. Such is the Picture of Christianity, drawn, by St. Paul, in the Verse before us. A *Miniature Piece*, indeed, it is ; but the Design is happy, and the Finishing masterly. The first Sentence may stand as a *Motto* to the Whole : *Without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness.* More literally, *The Mystery of Religion is confessedly great.* Where, by *Godliness*, or *Religion*,

* Rom. xii. 6.

are evidently meant, the distinguishing *Doctrines of Christianity*; and, by *Mystery*, the *Obscurity*, or *Incomprehensibility*, with which those Truths are more or less attended, during Man's present benighted State below.—I explain the Term, *mysterious*, by *incomprehensible*; because, properly speaking, the Mysteriousness of Divine Objects does not so much arise from the Nature of the *Objects themselves*, as from our *Inability* to comprehend them. The Darkness is in *Us*, not in *Them*. 'Tis the *Imperfection of Human Reason*, both as to Light, Capacity, and Strength, which gives Birth to the Mysteries. Thus many Things, unfathomable by *Men*, are self-evident to *Angels*: and Things still more obscure, in whose Contemplation even Angels would lose their Depth, are, to GOD, clearer than Meridian Day.

In direct Opposition both to Scripture and Common Sense, there are Writers, who make no Scruple to assert, roundly, that *Christianity is NOT mysterious*: and that, “whatever Doctrines are involved “in mystery, ought, for that very Reason, to be “rejected as false.”—If we admit this, we must, to be *confidently* complaisant, renounce our *Senses*, as well as our *Faith*, and throw *Philosophy* into the same Grave with *Christianity*. For, are not the *Mysteries of Nature*, no less than those of *GRACE*,

confessedly

confessedly great? Did that Philosopher ever live, who knew the *real Texture*, and could explain *all* the Properties, even of a single *Atom* that floats in the Air, or a Particle of *Sand* upon the Sea-Shore? And yet, to deny the *Existence* of these Bodys, merely because we know not *what* they are, nor *how* they exist, were Madness outright. Every Object that surrounds us, even those with which we are experimentally conversant, defeat our most labored Researches, and laugh our Penetration to scorn. If, then, there is more comprised in the most *inferior* and *familiar Instances* of Divine Wisdom, than, perhaps, Philosophy will be able to elucidate while the World remains; why should we start, at being told from Scripture, that *Great is the Mystery of Godlineſs?* Surely, Reason itself will acknowledge, that so far from *not* being mysterious at all, Things *Spiritual* and *Heavenly* must, from the transcendent Superiority of their very Nature, be abundantly **MORE** mysterious than the Objects of Sense. The *bigger* we go, the stronger this Observation binds. In the Scale of Beings, the farther our Contemplation *ascends*, the *more* must our Difficulty of Comprehension increase. *Matter*, both in itself and in its various Modifications, is inexplicably *mysterious*: the Nature of *SPIRIT*, whether *Human* or *Angelic*, is

more

more mysterious still: and GOD, the Infinite, Uncreated Spirit, is *most* mysterious of all*.

If the fashionable Maxim be true, that “Our *Faith* should go no farther than the clearness of *our Ideas* ;” i. e. in other Words, if all *Mysteries* are to be cashier’d and expunged without Mercy; we have nothing to do but to commence *Infidels* and *Madmen* at once. We must, by Parity of Argument, deny the Existence of *every Object* whatever, in the whole Compas of Nature; because there is not a single Object which we perfectly understand. We must deny the Being of a *Deity*, because our Reason is at a loss to explain his Essence and Manner of Operation. We must deny *our own* Existence, because we are ignorant both of the Particles whereof our *Bodys* are composed, and of the Nature of that *Soul* by which the human Body is actuated. In short, resolve to believe no *Mysterys*, and you virtually resolve to believe *nothing at all*: for every Thing is mysterious, in a greater or less Degree, from the highest Arch-Angel, down to the most imperceptible Animal.

* “ Some of *Epicetus*’s Scholars observed to that Philosopher, that He had told them many excellent Things concerning GOD; but that still they could not comprehend his Nature. To this the admirable Stoic is said to have answered, *Si omnino ego Deum declararem, vel ego Deus essem, vel Ille Deus non foret* : i. e. Were I able fully to set forth GOD, I must either be God myself, or God himself must cease to be so. See ARROWSMITH’s *Chain of Pr.* p. 131.

cule; and from the Sun in the Firmament, down to the minutest Particle of Matter. The very *Terms*, which Philosophy is forced to make use of, prove the Scantiness of that *rational Cordage*, which, unable to sound a *Drop* of common Water, would madly presume to fathom *Infinity*. What, for Instance, is *Attraction*? What is *Repulsion*? Names for certain *Effects*, of whose real *Causes* we are, in the main, as utterly ignorant, as the Boy that holds the Plough, or as the Peasant that directs the Team.

In the front of Religious Mysterys, St. Paul places the Miraculous and Supernatural Incarnation of Jesus Christ. “ *GOD was manifested in the Flesh:*” GOD the Son, who, in the Covenant of Redemption, had taken upon Him to deliver Man; became Man, to accomplish that Deliverance. The Truth of His *Divinity* is demonstrable from the whole Current of Scripture; and the Truth of His *Human Nature*, or the Reality of His Manifestation in the *Flesh*, is evident, from His having been liable, in general, to the Sinless Infirmitys incident to Men. He *slept*; He *shed Tears*; He experienced *Hunger*, *Thirst*, and *Weariness*; He was acquainted with *Pain* of Body, and *Distress* of Mind. In one Respect, indeed, He seems to have been exempted from the common Lot of other Human Beings: we no where find, to

the best of my Remembrance, that He ever, so much as once, experienced any Attack of *Sickness Disease**. The Reason of this extraordinary Circumstance was, no doubt, owing to the *sinless* Formation of His Humanity, by the immediate Operation of the Holy Ghost. *Sin* was That which introduced every Kind of *αταξία* into the human System; and *Disease* among the rest. But, the Man Christ Jesus, was formed and conceived totally without Stain. Hence He was, like our first Parents before the Fall, *naturally immortal*: nor could he have *dyed*, had He not, by an Act of gracious Susception, taken the Guilt of Men upon Himself, and become responsible, to Divine Justice, for the utmost Payment of their penal Debt: And, even under those Circumstances, we read, that His Death, though violent, was *voluntary*. His Resignation of Life is constantly represented, in Scripture, as *His own Act and Deed*. For, exclusively of his Union with the Second Person in the Godhead; His absolute Freedom from Sin would, of itself, have been a certain Security from the Possibility of Dying.—Hence, the Evangelists express them-

* It is indeed, declared, that *Himself took our Infirmitys, and bore our Sickneses*. Matth. viii. 17. meaning, I suppose, the *Sins* of his People; those *moral* Sickneses, which *Himself bore away in His own Body on the Tree*.

selves thus; αφήκε το πνεύμα, He dismissed, or let go His Spirit, Matthew xxvii. 50. παρέδωκε το πνεύμα, He resigned, delivered up, or made a Surrender of His Spirit, John xix. 30. St. Mark's and St. Luke's ἔπεινευσε, taken in Connection with John x. 18. evidently carrys the same Import.

As Christ was manifested in the Flesh, So was He Justified in the Spirit: not only justified as to the Divinity of his Person and Mission, and proved to be the Son of GOD by the Miracles which He wrought in Conjunction * with the Holy Spirit; but, likewise, Spiritually justified, by GOD the Father, from all those Sins, which, as the dying Surety of his People, He had taken upon Himself to expiate. He was thus spiritually or mystically justified, and received His open Discharge, as a Sin-bearing and Sin-atoning Savior, when he was raised from the Dead, and released from the Prison of the Tomb: when the Sun of Righteousness emerged from his sad, but short Eclipse; and rose, to set no more.

He was, moreover, seen of Angels: seen, with Joy and Adoration, by the Angels that never fell; seen, with Envy and Dismay, and acknowledged with Reluctance, by the apostate Spirits, who kept not their first Estate.—The Apostle adds, that He was preached unto the Gentiles: Preached

* Luke xi. 20.

under his two-fold Character of GOD and MEDIATOR ; preached as the only *Sacrifice* for Sin, and as the everlasting *Righteousness* of believing Sinners : preached, by all his faithful Ministers, in every Age, as well under the Legal, as under the Gospel Dispensation. And he will still be preached, to the End of Time, as long as there is one Elect Sinner uncalled, and 'till all the Vessels of Mercy are brought to the saving Knowledge and Love of Himself.

In Consequence of being thus *preached unto the Gentiles*, He is, and will continue to be, *Believed on in the World*. The Holy Spirit makes, and will persist to make, the Preaching of Christ Crucifyed, the grand Channel of His Converting Power. Pharisees, convinced of Sin, shall be dislodged from Reliance of their own Works, and seek to Jesus for Righteousness and Strength. Hell-deserving Offenders, who once saw no Comeliness in Christ, but, perhaps, blasphemed His Name, despised His Cross, and trod all His Commandments under their Feet ; pierced with the keen, but salutary Arrow of penitential Anguish, and melted down by effectual Grace ; shall look, for Salvation, to Him whom they have pierced, and mourn, in the Bitterness of their Souls, as one that mourneth for his First-born. All His People, throughout the World, shall believe in Him :

some

some with an *assured*, some with a *faltering Faith*; but they shall All *believe*: just as, when the *Israelites* were wounded by the flying Serpents in the Wilderness, some looked, to the *Brazen Image*, *steadfastly*; others *feebley*; some had a *full, near, and distinct View* of the elevated Remedy, others had a *distant, imperfect, confused Sight* of it; and many, perhaps, could but just raise their Eyes *toward* the Object, and hardly caught a *Glimpse* of it: yet they all *looked*, after some Rate or other; and All, who did, were healed. So all the People of Christ reach forward towards His Righteousness; some with a *strong*, some with a *trembling Hand*, but they shall All *grasp* at it, and All utter this Prayer (a Prayer, which was never, nor ever can be, breathed from a *graceless Heart*), *O let me be found in THEE, not having my own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith!*— They, who thus believe, are careful to *adorn the Doctrine of GOD* their Savior in all Things.

The Holy Spirit gives *Faith*; from *Faith*, springs *Holiness*; and the *End of Both* is *everlasting Life*. The entire Mystic Body of *CHRIST*, the whole Election of Grace, shall, like their triumphant Lord, when their Warfare is accomplished, be *Received up into Glory*.

But

But what I chiefly intend, at present, is, to consider That particular Clause of this Verse, which asserts, that Jesus was *Seen of Angels.*

By the *Angels*, here mentioned, we are chiefly to understand the *Ele&*&*^{*} Angels; who, being ordained to Glory, were immutably confirmed in Holiness, nor revolted from the Dignity and Blessedness in which they were created. These *saw* the Son of GOD, long before his Incarnation. They beheld Him in the Fullness of his Infinite and essential Glory, which He had, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, before all Worlds. — 'Tis probable, from Scripture, that Angels were the First-fruits of GOD's Creating Power, and called into Existence, before any Thing else was made: and it is certain, from Scripture, that the Second Person of the TRINITY, afterwards manifested in the Flesh, was the *Creator* of all the Angelic Hosts. Hence it follows, that He was *seen* of them, immediately upon their Creation: they were no sooner summoned into Being, than they *saw* Him, and adored. As Angels were his first Workmanship, their Bliss began with the Sight of HIM, and their first Employ was Praise. Thus they saw Him, thus they loved, and thus they worshipped; 'till the Fullness of Time was Come, when the *Antient of Days*

became an *Infant of Days*, and GOD the Son was found in *Fashion as a Man*. When that Blessed Person entered on His State of actual Humiliation, Angels *viewed*, and wondered: wondered to see the Object of their Adoration *made*, for a Time, lower than themselves *. They beheld Him, at Bethelehem, a Babe, wrapt in Swathes,

"When His Birth-place was a Stable,

"And his softest Bed was Hay †."

Though surrounding Cattle were the Chief Attendants on the Infant Messiah and his Virgin-Mother; though, in all outward Appearance, the new-born Savior was, from the very Moment of His Nativity, forsaken, *despised and rejected of Men*; He was still seen and revered of Angels. The Church of the Redeemed bowed the Knee, and Unfallen Spirits sung, in that ignominious Place, where Horses fed, and Oxen lowed. The Presence of GOD Incarnate consecrated the *Stable* into a *Temple of Glory*; and ennobled the *Manger*, where He slumbered, into a *Throne of Grace*.—Such did that humble Residence appear, in the Eyes of those Exalted Beings, who, like Him that made them, *See not as Man seeth.*

* *Heb. ii. 7. Βρέπε τι*, either for a very short While, or in a very small Degree.—It is properly spoken of Men, indefinitely; but held strictly true, even as accommodated to CHRIST Himself.

† Dr. WATTS,

If we trace the Adorable Mediator, from Infancy, to a State of *Youth*; we shall find Him busyed in following the Occupation of *Joseph*, His reputed Father. 'Tis recorded, in the Gospel*, that the Jews said, concerning Him, *Is not This the CARPENTER, the Son of Mary?*

Thus, He, who *laid the Foundations of the Earth*, and, by *His excellent Wisdom, made the Heavens*; He, who *shakes the System he hath made, and the Pillars thereof tremble*; who *speaketh to the Sun, and it shineth not, and sealeth up the Stars*; even HE disdained not to fix a Mark of Honor upon honest Industry, by earning His own Livelihood, at *Nazareth*, as soon as His Age would permit. There and Then was He *seen of Angels*. They saw Him laboriously employed, and literally experiencing the Truth of the Penal Edict, denounced soon after the Fall, that *In the Sweat of his Brow Man should eat Bread*.—We do not, indeed, find that CHRIST wrought with His Hands, *after* He commenced a Preacher. Which observable Change of Conduct was designed, perhaps, to teach us, That *they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel*; and, detaching themselves from every unnecessary Avocation, devote their Time and Abilitys, as far as possible, to the Dutys of their High Calling.

* *Mark vi. 3.*

Though

Though the Blessed Jesus was conceived and born, without *Original Sin*; though He, moreover, lived perfectly exempt from the remotest Shadow of *actual Transgression*; still, He vouchsafed to stamp the highest Authority on the *Laver of Typical Regeneration*, by His own personal Submission to the Ordinance of *Baptism*. He would not enter on the Exercise of his public Ministry, 'till He had been, solemnly and openly, devoted to the visible Service of GOD.—Might He not, likewise, have *another* and still *superior* view, in His condescending Susception of this Sacred Rite? *Washing* seems, necessarily, to carry with it the Idea of previous *Defilement*. Whoever is brought to the Baptismal Font, is brought thither *as a Sinner*. And the whole Ceremony is a solemn recognition of *Human Guilt*, as well as strikingly emblematical of the *Way* and *Manner* in which *Pardon* and *Sanctification* are attained; even by the Effusion of the Messiah's BLOOD, and the Hallowing Agency of His Blessed SPIRIT. Now, if Baptism be, confessedly, an Acknowledgment of human *sinfullness*; How came HE to divide the Waves of *Jordan*, who was infinitely Holy, as GOD, and immaculately righteous, as Man? Probably, because He was made *Sin for Us**. In a Way of Imputation, the

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

Lord laid on Him the Iniquity of All His People.* And Jesus was not ashamed, publicly to avow the mercifull Office He had assumed. Hence, though absolutely sinless, He was *Baptized* as a Sinner. And this practical Declaration of His Atoning Character, was a part of that exterior *Righteousness*, which, as the Victim and Substitute of His Saints, it became Him to fulfill†.—On this great Occasion, we read, that *the Heavens were opened*. We are not, indeed, expressly told, that He was *Seen of Angels*; though, no Doubt, He was. The Reason, perhaps, why the Mention of that Circumstance was omitted by the Evangelists, might be, Because PERSONAGES, of Dignity *infinitely* superior to That of *Angels*, constituted and crowned the Grandeur of the Scene. The Everlasting FATHER and the Uncreated SPIRIT gave sensible Manifestations of Their immediate Presence; while the Co-equal SON, under the *Likeness of sinful Flesh*, parted the mystic Stream. ——*Angels*, who, just before, admired to see the *blameless IMMANUEL Baptized*; suddenly exchanged their Admiration, for adoring *Awe*; and wrapt their prostrate Faces in their Wings, when the FATHER ALMIGHTY deigned, audibly, to testify His Complacency in the Person and Priesthood of His Incarnate SON; and the co-eternal

* *Isaiab liii. 6.*† *Matth. iii. 15.*

SPIRIT bowed the Heavens and came down, not in the Form, but (*ωτει περιποσαν*) after the Manner, of a Dove: with a gentle, gradual, hovering Descent. Well might Angels be thrown, as it were, into Shades, by the Silence of the Sacred Historians. For, what are Angels, when compared with GOD! evanid Stars, eclipsed and lost, amid the boundless, overwhelming Blaze of Day.

Shortly after, He was seen of Angels, when assailed in the Wilderness, by the Enemy of GOD and Man. They stood by, not to give the Messiah their Assistance, for He needed none: but, simply, as Spectators of His Conflict, and Witnesses of his Conquest. As they had, formerly, seen *Paradise lost*, by the yielding Frailty of *Adam*; so they now beheld *Paradise regained*, by the unrelaxing Firmness of JESUS CHRIST the Righteous: AFTER He had fought the good Fight, and had actually foiled the Tempter, we read that Angels ministered unto Him: but not before.

" Temptation," says an useful Writer *, " is " the Fire that brings up the *Scum* of the Heart. " The Corrupt Heart resembles an Ant's Nest, " on which, while the Stone lyeth, none of them " appear; but, take off That, and stir them with " only the Point of a Straw; what a Swarm is " there, and how lively they are! Just such a

* Mr. Boston, in his *Fourfold State of Human Nature*.

" Sight, O Man, would thy Heart afford thee,
 " did the LORD but withdraw the *Restraint* He
 " has laid upon it, and suffer Satan to stir it up
 " by Temptation." Such is the Heart of Man ;
 but not such was the Heart of CHRIST. Though
 he was *tempted in all Points*, tempted even to
Idolatry and *Self-Murder*, yet was He totally
*without Sin**. He came forth, *brighter*, but
not purer, from the Furnace : *brighter*, because
 his Graces were rendered more *conspicuous*, by
 the fiery Tryal ; but *not purer*, because He had
 no moral Dross to lose. When Satan tempted
 CHRIST, 'twas like striking Fire upon *Ice*, or upon
 a *Wave* of the Sea : there was nothing, in His
 sinless Nature, for the Sparks to lay hold on ;
 but every Thing, that could resist and quench
 them. All the Adversary's Efforts on the
 Messiah's Integrity, were like Arrows shot at the
 Firmament : or, as an excellent Person † expresses
 it, resembled " The Motions of a Serpent on a
 " Rock ; where they can make no Impression,
 " nor leave the least Dent or Trace behind them.
 " —But on *Us*, they are as the Trailings of a
 " Serpent on *Sand*, or *Dust* : they make a Print,
 " and leave *some* Stain, on the Imagination at
 " least, if not on the Heart." In every Assault,

* Matth. iv. 6, 9. Hebr. iv. 15.

† Gurnall's Christian Armor, Vol. i. p. 99.

therefore, which we are called to sustain; may we look, for Safety and for Strength, to the Captain of our Salvation, who, in His own Person, bruised the Serpent's Head, and is able to succor them that are tempted. And remember, O assaulted Christian, to thy unspeakable Comfort, that thou shalt, in the End, be more than Conqueror through Him that hath loved thee. As thy Savior was seen of Angels, when He quenched the fiery Darts of the Wicked One; so art thou seen of thy Savior, under all thy Conflicts and Distresses: nor seen only, but supported and embraced; and, because He overcame, thou shalt overcome also.— A famous Dutch Admiral *, in the Morning of that Day on which he fell, is reported to have said, " This Day, I shall be crowned either " with Laurels, or with Cypress :" intimating, his determined Resolution, either to gain the Victory, or to lose his Life. And his Life he accordingly lost. A Musket Ball, from the English Fleet, crowned, with Cypress, one of the ablest Sea-Officers that ever fought. But 'tis the peculiar Happiness of the CHRISTIAN Warrior, to know assuredly, from God's inviolable Promise, that no Weapon, formed against the Heirs of Salvation, shall finally prosper or prevail. Whoever is, by Saving Grace, enlisted under the Banner

* Van Trump.

of the Cross, may be certain, before he fights, that he shall be crowned, not with *Cypress*, but with *Laurels*. Prior to his striking a single Blow, he is *Insured*, both as to Safety and Conquest, by That Omnipotent Being, whose neverfailing *Providence*, as our Church admirably expresses it, *orders all Things both in Heaven and Earth**.

When the SON of GOD commenced a *Minister of the Gospel*, and delivered, to High and Low, in Season and out of Season, the Message of Salvation; He was *Seen* and *Heard* of *Angels*. On *Some Occasions*, they Saw the Heavenly Preacher *weep* over his unfeeling Auditorys; and, on *all Occasions*, heard Him declare the Counsel of GOD, as never Man spake 'till then. Those Mysterys of Grace, which, at this very Day,

* If so, an *Arminian* may object, If we are certain, before-hand, of overcoming, farewell to all Diligence of our own: we may unbuckle our Armor, and sit down without fighting at all. This *Cavil* refutes itself. How can the Assurance, of Final Victory, supersede the Necessity of contending, when *Fighting* is the only possible Means by which *Victory* can be gained? History, both Sacred and Profane, affords almost innumerable Instances, that even a strong *Probability* of Conquest inspires an Army with Impetus and Vigor, next to invincible. Much more would an *infallible Certainty* of Success, embolden even the Diffident, stimulate the Indolent, and animate the Courageous with redoubled Ardor.—How then, is it possible, that, in the *Spiritual Warfare*, Certainty of Conquest should either depress the Timid, or emasculate the Strong?

*Angels desire to look deeper into ; they learned from His blessed Lips : and bending SERAPHS derived Sublime Instruction from those matchless Discourses which obdurate Men despised. — How beautiful, upon the Mountains, were the Feet, i. e. the Zeal and the Labors, of Him who brought good Tidings, and published Peace * between God and Sinners ! Himself the Peace-maker and the Peace-revealer ! How often did He, who came to seek and to save That which was lost, consecrate the Mountains of Judea, by His own personal Ministrations ; and cause the Hills of the Earthly Canaan to echo with the sweetest Notes of SALVATION BY GRACE ; while Streams and Rocks, responsive, reverberated the joyful Sound ! Elect Angels, hovering in mid Air, were his invisible Disciples : and Elect Sinners, converted by His efficacious Call, were the visible Seals of His Ministry.—O might the present Preachers of His Word catch a Ray of His celestial Ardor, adopt His indefatigable Zeal, and imbibe the Spirit of His Love ! Happy They, who are enabled to imitate the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls ! and oh, that more of These were sent forth into the Harvest ! Yet, why do I wish for more ? The Sovereign Master of the Vineyard best knows what He has to do. GOD hath, in every age, raised*

* *Isaiab lii. 7.*

up a Number of Evangelical Ministers, sufficient to answer his Purposes of Grace. Divine Wisdom, no doubt, proportions the Number of Gospel-Laborers, to the extent of the Spiritual Harvest He means to gather in. God's Elect People may be more, or fewer, in one Generation, than another: and hence, at different Periods, Christian Preachers multiply or decrease *: just as a skilful Husbandman lessens or enlarges the Number of his *Reapers*, according to the Quantity of *Corn* he has to cut. If *Twenty* are sufficient for the Harvest, he will not employ *Fifty*: if an *Hundred* be requisite, an *Hundred* will be sent forth.

In His secret Approaches to GOD, was Jesus *seen of Angels*. They beheld, they more than beheld,—they *felt*, when, *with strong Crys and Tears*, He poured out His Soul in private Prayer. Unembodied Spirits, with admiring Sympathy, thronged his devout retirements: and though they ever burned with zeal for GOD, yet they caught *additional Fervor* from the agonizing Petitions of their Incarnate Creator. They lighted their Taper at His hallowed Fire. Listening Angels grew more angelic; and Seraphs flew back to Heaven, more seraphic than they came.

When every Eye, except His own, was closed in Sleep, oft would He withdraw to some deso-

* *Psalms lxvii. 11.*

iate Mountain, or unfrequented Field ; and spend whole Nights in Communion with GOD. Like the solitary, but melodious *Nightingale*, he retreated from the Scenes of Hurry and Observation, to send up the heavenly Breathings of His inmost Soul, in undiverted Supplications and unmolested Praise. At these Seasons it was, that, as Dr. *Watts* finely sings,

*Cold Mountains and the Midnight Air
Witness'd the Fervor of his Pray'r.*

But, though unseen of *Men*, the praying **MESSIAH** was seen of *Angels*, and seen of GOD. Not a Sigh that heaved the Mediator's Breast, nor a Groan He uttered, nor a Petition He advanced, but was noticed, accepted, and recorded in Heaven : and shall have its full effect, in the *Glory* of His Father, and the *Salvation* of all His People.

Oh, how unlike the Prayers of **CHRIST** are the frozen, careless, languid, wandering, unfelt Devotions of Those on Earth, who call themselves His Disciples ! May He pour down upon us *the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications*. Then shall we feel the Importance of Divine Things, as *He* felt them. We shall *walk*, in some Measure, as Jesus walked ; and *pray*, as Jesus prayed.

On the Mount of *Transfiguration*, prior to His last Sufferings, was He likewise seen of *Angels*. At

humble Distance they heard Him speak with the glorify'd Soul of MOSES and the glorify'd Person of ELIJAH, concerning *His own Decease which He was shortly to accomplish at Jerusalem**. As in the sinless Obedience of His *Life*, He had perfectly fulfilled the Law, for the Justification of His mystic Body, the Church; so by His propitiatory *Death*, He was to fulfill the *Prophecys* of old, and *make Atonement for the Sins of the People before the Lord*. *Moses*, therefore, by whom the *Law* had been given; and *Elijah*, as Representative of the *Prophets*; left, for a while, their Thrones in Glory, to bear witness, once more, to the Messiahship of Jesus. On this Occasion, *Angels* saw His human Nature brighten into Glory superior to their's. An Earnest and a Foretaste of the Majesty with which *He* should be invested, when His Sufferings, (then just at Hand) should be accomplished: and of the Glory which the Bodys of His *Saints* shall wear, when the *Trump of GOD* shall sound, and the *Resurrection of the Just* take place.

Let not Believers, like the mistaken Disciples who accompanied their Lord at the Time of His Transfiguration, think to *set up Tabernacles of Abode on the Mount* of Divine Communion. Jesus Himself *came down* from the Mount; and was, soon after, *seen of Angels* in the Valley of Gethsemane.

* Luke ix. 31.

On that sad, that solemn Night, when He was sold and delivered into the Hands of sinful Men; He retired for the last Time before He suffered, into the Garden at the Foot of the Mount of Olives. That Garden, to which He had oft Times resort'd, both Alone, and with his Disciples, for the Purposes of secret Prayer, and religious Conversation. That Garden, in which he had enjoyed so many delightful Seasons of Fellowship with GOD. That Garden, every Spot, perhaps, of whose distinguished Ground had been consecrated by the Footsteps of a meditating, and the Knees of an adoring Savior. Yet Here, alas, were His dying Sorrows to begin. Angels, who had, just before, seen Him institute and celebrate the mystic Supper, attended him in his Last Retreat to this once delightfull, but now tremendous Place. Well might a good man say, "All Places are happy, or miserable, in Proportion as GOD vouchsafes or denies His gracious Presence therein." In Gethsemane, where Jesus had so often experienced the ravishing Consolations of His heavenly Father's Countenance; in this very Gethsemane, must the same blessed Jesus experience the first Outpourings of his Almighty Father's Wrath. HERE it was, that his righteous Soul became exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death. HERE it was, that the spotless Victim began to feel the

dreadfull Weight of Imputed Guilt, and the Terrors of avenging Justice.—When His inward Agony forced His very Blood from it's Veins; which even made its way through His three-fold Vesture, and fell * clotted to the Ground ; when

* Luke xxii. 44. *And his Sweat was as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground:* meaning, as it should seem, that the Agony, our Lord was in, forced, at once, His *Blood* from it's finer Vessels, and the *Sweat* from all His Pores : which (the *Sweat* and the *Blood*) mingling in their Fall, were by the extreme Coldness and Rigour of the Weather, condensed and frozen into solid Clots, before they reached the Ground. The Word *ωστι*, render'd *as it were*, does not, I apprehend, import that real Blood did not actually transude from His Body: but that it was not Blood *alone*. Add to this, that, as Bengelius well observes, *ωστι* relates, not to *ἀμαλος* but to *Ὥρομβος καταβαντοτες*; and implies, as another Learned Foreigner observes, that, His *Sweat* was so *mixed* and *discolored* with the concomitant Blood, as to *resemble*, in it's united appearance, mere Blood only. — *Luke de Bruges*, the Critic last referred to, has a very valuable Note on the Passage: *Illud, QUASI, non significat, hunc non fuisse verum Sanguinem, sed non fuisse verè Guttas Sanguinis, sed Guttæ aquæas mixtas sanguine;* quod etiam fieri possit per Naturam Vim intus patientem, ac proinde per Poras ejicientem una cum Aquâ Sanguinem: *Præsertim ubi Corpus est rarum ac delicatum, et Sanguis subtilis, ut in CHRISTO indubie erat.*

The Note of Bengelius is equally judicious: *Θρόμβος, Grumi, à θρεψι i. e. πηξαι.* — *Θρόμβος ἀμαλος, Guttæ Spissæ et Concretæ veri Sanguinis.* *Vis Particulæ ωστι cadit super Θρόμβοις, non suer ἀμαλος, ut patet ex Epitheto, ejusque plurali, καταβαντοτες.* *Sanguis per minores Guttulas è Poris manans, concrescebat propter Copiam.* *Si Sudor non fuisset sanguineus, Mentio Sanguinis planè abesse poterat: nam Vocabulum Θρόμβος etiam per se competebat Sudori spiffo.*

HIMSELF lay prostrate on the Earth, with his Garments literally *roll'd in Blood*; When, as the Surety of the Covenant, and as the Substitute of His People, He bore the *Sins* and *carryed* the *Sorrows* of the whole Believing World; When with the Names of His Mystic *Israel* upon His Heart, our Great *High Priest, Jesus, the Son* and the *Lamb of GOD* sustained, intensively, that Punishment for Sin, which must, otherwise, have been levyed, extensively, on Sinners, to all Eternity: When he cryed, in the Bitterness of His Soul, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me;* —He was seen, He was heard, He was deplored, *of Angels.* They joined with the agonizing Petitioner. They united their Supplications with His: and the Prayers of Angels went up, for once, *through the Hands of a Mediator.*

But it was NOT possible for the Cup to *pass* from Him. The *Decree* must be accomplished. The *Covenant* of Grace must be fullfilled. GOD's *People* must be saved. The Savior, therefore, must *Dye.* Himself was sensible of this. Hence, though, as *Man*, His Anguish induced Him to wish that, *if possible*, He might drink no deeper of the penal Cup; yet, as Party to the *Covenant* of Redemption, He, in the same Breath, consents to drink the *Dregs* and *wring them out*: adding, *Nevertheless, not my Will, but THINE, be done;* If Sinners can be saved, and thy Son not dye, Let

thy Son be spared; but if otherwise, if my People must perish, or thy Son be slain, O save my people and slay thy Son.—Alternate Grief, and Wonder, heaved the celestial Bosoms of attending *Angels*: Grief, at the Sufferings He endured; Wonder, at his Magnanimity of Love to Man; Love, which the *many Waters* of Divine Indignation could not quench, nor all the Floods of Horror and Anguish drown.

Angels saw Him receive the insidious Kiss, by which He was Betrayed. They saw Him arraigned at the Bar of the very Men, who were indebted for their Creation to the Word of His Power; and who owed the Stations they bore, to the Disposals of his Providence. *Angels* heard, and shuddered at, the Sentence, by which he was condemned to Dye. They saw Him mocked, and struck, and clothed with insulting Scarlet. He was seen of *Angels*, when He deigned to wear a Crown of Thorns. They beheld, and if Angels can weep, they wept, when He was tyed to the Ignominious Pillar, and scourged with Rods of knotted Wire; when, according to the Prediction of the Royal Prophet, *The Ploughers ploughed upon His Back, and made long Furrows.*

Angels saw, and Astonishment was in Heaven, when He bid not His Face from Shame and Spitting. They saw, when, through the Extremity of Grief

Grief and Torture, His Beauty consumed away,
like as it were a Moth fretting a Garment: When
 He could say, *Thy Rebuke hath broken my Heart*;
I am full of Heaviness: I looked for some to take
 Pity on me, but there was none; neither found I any
 to comfort me. The Man CHRIST JESUS, being
 formed without Sin, and by the immediate Agency
 of the HOLY GHOST; was doubtless, transcen-
 dently fair, and augustly beautifull. Hence His
Human Nature was compared to the *Temple*: a
 Structure eminently *holy*, and peculiarly *elegant*.
 Prior to His Sufferings, He was, literally, *fairer*
than the Children of Men. It was not, till His
 blessed Person had been disfigured with Wounds,
 and emaciated with Grief; 'till His Face was *foul*
with weeping, and on His Eyelids *sat the Shadow*
of Death; that He is said to have had *neither*
Form nor Comeliness; but that *His Face was marred*
more than any Man's, and his Countenance than the
Sons of Men.

Angels throng'd around the Majestic Sufferer,
 when He was led forth to *Crucifixion*, as a Lamb
 to the Slaughter. They saw Him nailed to the
 Instrument of Death, after He had fainted beneath
 its weight. And, had I an Angel's Tongue, I
 should find it impossible to tell what Angels felt,
 when they heard Him groan, from the deepest
 Recesses of His agonizing Heart, that Exclama-
 tion

tion of overwhelming woe ; — *My God, My God,*
why hast thou forsaken me ? — *Forsaken*, cry'd the
 deserted Savior. Angels caught the dismal Ac-
 cents. *Forsaken, Forsaken*, the sad and astonish'd
 Choir reply'd.

Surely, all Heaven was, at that dreadfull Mo-
 ment, empty'd of it's Inhabitants. Surely, not
 Angels only, but the *Spirits likewise of Just Men*
made perfect (who had been Saved on the Credit of
 that great Sacrifice which was now offering up),
 started from their Thrones, and dropt their Crowns;
 quitted, for a while, the Abodes of Bliss, and, with
 pensive Admiration and drooping Wings, hovered
 round the Cross of their departing Lord. If ever
 Sorrow was in Heaven ; if ever the *Harps* of the
 Blessed were suspended, silent, and unstrung *on*
the Willows of Dismay ; if ever *Angels* ceas'd to
 Praise, and *glorify'd Souls* forgot to Sing ; if ever the
 Harmony of the Sky was, not merely interrupted,
 but, if it be possible, exchang'd for *Lamentation*,
and Mourning and Woe ; — it must have been dur-
 ing the Six Tremendous Hours (such Hours as
 Nature never saw before, nor will ever see again),
 that the Dying Jesus hung upon the Tree.

Having, amidst all His personal Agonys, de-
 tain'd Himself on Earth, 'till He had *look'd a*
 dying Blasphemer into Repentance : and 'till
 He had made Provision for the Maintenance of

His

His widow'd Mother (who stood, weeping and adoring, at the Foot of His Cross) by committing Her to the Care and Guardianship of his best-belov'd Disciple; He cry'd, with a loud triumphant Voice, *IT IS FINISH'D*: "I have suffered enough. The Types, and the Prophecys, are accomplish'd. My Covenant Engagements are fullfilled. The Debts of my People are paid. I have *finish'd Transgression*; I have *made an End of Sin*; I have wrought out and brought in an *Everlasting Righteousness*. The Law is magnify'd. Justice is satisfy'd. My Warfare is over. My Conflicts are past." His Spiritual Desertions were now superseded. The Light of God's Countenance gave the expiring Mediator *the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, and the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness*. The *SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS* goes down without a Cloud. He departs in Peace, with those comfortable Words of Filial confidence on His Lips, *Father, into Thy Hands I Command my Spirit.* Words that pierced the Earth to her Centre, and shook her in her Orbit, cleft the pondrous Rocks; rended the Vail of the Temple, and expos'd it's sacred, but now superseded Arcana, to common view; unlock'd the Abodes of Death; and threw open the Graves of many a departed Saint; who, probably (as did their triumphant Lord shortly after) rose

to dye no more, but ascended, in their respective Bodys, with Him, when He went up from the Mount of Olives.—I have already observ'd, that Christ continu'd alive on the Cross, for the space of Six Hours. During the last Three, There was Darkness over all the Earth. The Sun hid his Beams. The dreadfull Transaction on Mount Calvary.

“drove back his Chariot. Midnight veil'd the World:

“A Midnight, Nature shudder'd to behold.”

Why was the Earth darken'd? not only to demonstrate the Dignity of HIM that bled, but, perhaps, to shadow forth that still more deep and dismal Darkness, which the Soul of the Messiah was then experiencing, under the awful Withdrawings of His Father's Countenance. When His Father's sensible Presence return'd, and Jesus, with His dying Breath, declar'd his Sufferings fulfill'd, Light re-visited the Earth, and the Sufferer was receiv'd into Glory. Joy was again in Heaven (never to be absent more), when the Human Soul of Christ ascended from the Cross. With what Eclats of admiring Transport was He seen of Angels, when He rode on Cherubs and did fly, and went up to His Throne as on the Wings of the Wind?

S E R M O N II.

ONE gratefull and pious Office was yet to be perform'd. The precious *Remains* of Christ must be releas'd from the Cross, and consign'd to the *Sepulchre*. A Virgin-Tomb, wherein no Person had ever been deposited, is to receive the sinless Offspring of a Virgin-Parent. Think not, that His disconsolate Mother, and his favorite Disciple *John*, together with *Joseph* of *Arimathaea*, and *Nicodemus*, the converted Rabbi; — think not that these were the *only* Mourners, who waited on the breathless Jesus to the Place of Interment. As His triumphant Spirit, on it's Emersion from the Body, had been convoy'd to Heaven by a Detachment of Angelic Beings; so, without a Doubt, a *Guard du Corps* was left below, who forsook not their Station at the Cross, 'till the *Temple of His Body* was taken down. These join'd, invisibly, the tender solicitude of those Holy Persons, who pay'd (as they imagin'd) their *last* Tribute of Love to the

departed MESSIAH. His Obsequies were celebrated by Angels, and by Men: who saw the Lord of Life and Glory counted with them that go down into the Pit; free among the Dead, like the Slain that lie in the Grave, who are remembered no more, but are cut off by God's Hand; when He was laid in the Lowest Pit; in a Place of Darkness, and in the Deep*. While the few, the very few Believers, who had the Courage to follow His Lov'd Remains to their Bed of Rest, were embalming the Lord with their Spices and their Tears; Angels, though deeply and awfully imprest with the mournfull Scene, sung, perhaps, This for the funeral Anthem, *Thou wilt not leave His Soul in the State of Invisibility and Separation; neither wilt thou suffer the Body of thine Holy One to see Corruption.* †

He was seen of Angels, when He arose, on the Third auspicious Day. An Angel of God burst the Seal, and roll'd away the Stone from the Entrance of the Cavern, and sat upon it: His Countenance was like Lightening, and his Raiment white as Snow; and, for Fear of him, the Keepers, or Roman Guard, consisting of Sixty Soldiers, did shake, and became as dead Men. More than One of the Celestial Host appear'd to the trembling Women and the anxious Apostles, who

* Psalm lxxxviii.

† Psalm xvi.

came

came shortly after, to visit the Place where the Lord lay. As Angels had been the Annuntiators of His Birth, Angels were the first Preachers of his Resurrection. *Why seek ye the Living among the Dead? He is not here: He is risen.*

Forty Days were the Space that interven'd, between the Resurrection and the *Ascension* of Christ. This memorable Interval He devoted to the Comfort, Instruction, and Confirmation of his Disciples. If the *General* appear to be slain, 'tis usual for his *Soldiers* to fly. But, when he shews Himself alive, his rallying Troops forget their Panic, and return to their deserted Banners. Such was the Conduct of the Apostles. They threw down their Shields, and *fled*, when the *Captain of their Salvation* fell: They resumed their Arms, and flock'd again to His Person, when the *Prince of Life* reviv'd. In *flying*, they shew'd what the *Best* are, if left to their own Strength and Faithfullness: In *returning*, they were erected, by recovering Grace, into endless Monuments of the Certainty of that Declaration, (a Declaration, which holds as true of every Individual Believer, as it did of the Elect Apostles), *Those whom thou hast GIVEN me, to save and redeem, I have KEPT; and [zdels] NOT ONE of them is, or can, finally, be Lost.*—The Sacred History informs us, that, prior to his *Ascension*, Jesus

convers'd

convers'd with his Disciples, on *the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.* On the Fortieth Day from his Resurrection, leading 'em to the *Mount of Olives* (it should seem, to *That* particular *Part* of the Mount, which immediately over-look'd the Village of *Bethany*), He took his last Farewell, on Earth, of Those who were to see Him no more on this side Glory. — A wise and tender Parent, when about to travel into a far Country, takes Care to leave his remaining Family in the Charge of such Hands as he can safely trust. Nor would the Shepherd of *Israel* ascend from his Flock below, 'till he had reviv'd them with the Assurance of their soon receiving such a Plenitude of *the Holy Ghost*, and of *Power from on High*, as they had never yet experienc'd. Very lately, they had given dismal Proof, in their own Personal Conduct, of the exceeding low Ebb to which the Exercise of inherent Grace may be reduc'd, without the *Special Presence* and Guidance of God the *Holy Spirit*. Christ therefore promises them the future Security of *His effectual Influence*: *ye shall be baptized with the HOLY GHOST, not many Days hence; and ye shall be Witnesses to Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost Part of the Earth.* — And now the Great *High Priest*, *JESUS the Son of God*, is for passing

into

into the Heavens. Having Glorify'd his Father on the Earth, and Finisb'd the Work of His People's Salvation *which* had been given Him to do; He prepares to be glorify'd Himself, by participating, in His Human Nature, as much as it can receive of *that Glory, which*, as a Divine Person, He bad with the Father before the World was. But not 'till, in Quality of King and Priest, He has, once more, solemnly, and authoritatively, *Blessed* His Apostles and Disciples, in His Father's Name and in his own.— When *Elijah* was taken up into Heaven by the Ministry of SERAPHS (sublimely styl'd, a *Chariot and Horses of Fire*); the ascending Prophet drop'd his Mantle on the plaintive *Elisha* who was left below: with which precious Legacy, *ELISHA smote the Waters of Jordan*, so that *they parted hither and thither, and Elisha went over** on dry Ground. So the Ascending SAVIOR, *Elijah's* illustrious Anti Type, entail'd His *Blessing*, and bequeath'd His *Mantle* to the Children He left behind: The Mantle of His *Righteousness*, and the Covering of His *Spirit*; where-with His Saints are enabled to *smite the Waters of Affliction, Persecution, Temptation, and Death itself.* All which shall cleave in twain, like a scroll that is rolled back, and leave a way

• 2 Kings ii.

for

for the Ransom'd of the Lord to pass safely and comfortably over.

This was, perhaps, the Tenor of the Blessing wherewith JESUS the Man of God, Himself both God and Man, blessed His mystic Israel, as He mounted to His Throne : *And now I am no more in the World, but These are in the World, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep, through thine own Name, Those whom thou hast given me that they may be one, as We are : I in them, and Thou in Me, that They may be made perfect in one. Father, I will that These, and They also who shall believe on me through their Word, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory. I pray for THEM ; I pray not for the World, but for Them whom Thou hast given me : For THEY are Thine.*

And it came to pass, That WHILE He blessed them, He was parted from them, and was carried up into Heaven* : Giving, it may be, as He soared, This parting Benediction to his Church collective, *The Lord bless Thee and keep Thee ; The Lord make His Face shine upon Thee and be gracious unto Thee ; The Lord lift up His Countenance upon Thee, and give Thee Peace,* Numb. vi. 24, 26. Thus did He put His Name upon the People of His Love, and blessed them.

* Luke xxiv. 51. Acts i. 9.

But where were the *Angels* all this while? were They unactive, on so distinguish'd an occasion? Surely, no. He was seen of them, He was praised and waited on by them, when He ascended up on high and led *Captivity Captive*. All Heaven was in concert, above; and all the peopled Air was Harmony, as He ascended through. Some of the Cherubic Hosts were dispatch'd, as Heralds; making proclamation, as they flew, *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in.* — Who is this King of Glory, chaunted Others of the extatic Legions? — The LORD, Jehovah in Human Nature, strong and mighty to save; the LORD, mighty in Battle, the Conqueror of Sin and Death and Hell, returning Triumphant from his successfull warfare: the LORD of Hosts, Creator of us Angels, and the Ransomer of the Nations of them that are saved; HE is the King of Glory*. — Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His Holy Place? He, of whom alone it could be said, that He had clean Hands and a pure Heart†: in His Nature, totally Sinless; and, in His Life, the perfect Fulfiller of all Righteousness. — Thus did God go up with a Shout,

* *Psalms xxiv. 7—10.*† *Ibid. v. 3, 4.*

and the Lord with the Sound of a Trumpet * : attending Spirits sang, *Rise up, Lord, and let Thine Enemies be scattered* † ; while the gazing Disciples, responsive from below, cry'd out, *Return, O Lord*, now in the Power of thy Spirit, and hereafter in the Brightness of thy personal Coming, *to the many Thousands of Israel* † ! Might it not be said, concerning those highly favor'd Persons, who were witnesses of His Ascension, *They have seen thy Goings, O God, even the Goings of my God, my King, in the Sanctuary* : the Singers went before, the Players on Instruments followed after ‡ ; all the Joy of the Blessed was in full exercise, all the Melody of Heaven was at the Height, when JESUS was usher'd to his Throne, and when, as a Lamb newly Slain, as a God totally and finally victorious, He enter'd into the Holy Place for Us.

Thus, at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, was JESUS seen of Angels. They also see Him now. At this very Moment, they are beholding Him in Glory. Angels, who were never incarnated, view, with wonder, the exalted Humanity of Him that wept in the Manger and hung upon the Tree.

* *Psal. xlvii. 5.*

† † *Numb. x. 35, 36.*

‡ *Psal. lxviii. 24, 25.*

*" Princes to His Imperial Name
bend their bright Sceptres down ;
Dominions, Thrones, and Pow'rs rejoice
to see Him wear the Crown :*

*" Arch-Angels sound His lofty Praise
thro' ev'ry heav'nly Street,
and lay their highest honours down
submissive at His Feet :*

*" Those soft, those blessed Feet of His,
which, once, rude Iron tore !
High on a Throne of Light they stand,
while all the Saints adore * ."*

Angels shall see Him, and augment the Splendor of His Appearance, when He shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire. He will, as Himself expresses it, come in His Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, Matth. xxv. 31. The Voice of the Arch-Angel shall sound, and the Trump of God. One Branch of their Business will be, to gather together the Dust of His Elect from the four Winds, from the uttermost Part of the Earth, to the uttermost Part of the Heaven, Mark xiii. 27. By their Ministry, perhaps, the Knot of indissoluble Union, between the glorified Soul and the

* Dr. Watts.

risen Body of each respective Believer, may be tyed. *They*, perhaps, will, when Christ gives the Signal, set Fire to the World, and regulate that *Conflagration* which shall issue in the *new Heaven* (i. e. a new Body of Air) and *new Earth*, *wherein dwelleth Righteousness**. Whether Angels will share in the Glory of the *Millenniary State*; or, whether that Reign will be peculiar to CHRIST and his *Redeem'd People* only; is not, I believe, clearly reveal'd. But this we can make no doubt of, that, when the Millennium is over, and the *second Resurrection* (the Resurrection of the Unjust) has taken place; when sentence shall be past, and the Books closed; when the Unrighteous are turned into Hell, and the Elect enter, with Christ, into the final Enjoyment of Glory; Angels and Saints will for ever *see*, for ever *admire*, and *love*, *worship* and *resemble* HIM that *sitteth on the Throne*.

But, must Believers wait 'till *Death and Glory* give them a sight of Christ? No. As He was, on Earth, *seen of Angels*; so, Blessed-be the Riches of His Grace, He is, even on Earth, sometimes *seen of MEN*: seen, not literally, but with the *Eye of Faith*, and in the *Light of His Holy Spirit*.—When our Evidences are clear and

* 2 Pet. iii. 7—10—12, 13.

bright, when He *manifests Himself** to the Souls of his People, and gladdens them with sweet views of Interest in His Covenant-Favor, His Covenant-Righteousness, and Covenant-Sufferings ; when He takes us up with Him on the Mount of Secret Communion, and gives us a Glimpse of *the good Land which is afar off* ; when He sends *the Earnest of our Inheritance* into our Hearts, even *the Spirit of Adoption*, causing us to cry, *Abba, Father* ; when He makes us experience the Meltings of His Presence, and the Out-pourings of His Love ; we may each cry out with the Apostle, *Have I not seen Christ Jesus the Lord † ?* Yes, may it be reply'd, to our great and endless Comfort, *The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldest know his Will, and see that Just One, and shouldest bear the Voice of His Mouth ‡ .*

I have seen God Face to Face, said Jacob.—Mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts ; said Isaiah.—I have heard of Thee, by the Hearing of the Ear, but now my Eye seeth Thee ; cryed Holy Job.—This is the Will of Him who sent me, that every one who SEETH the Son, and believeth on Him, should have everlasting Life ; says He that was dead, and liveth, and is alive for evermore.

* John xiv. 21, † 1 Cor. ix. 1. ‡ Act. xxii. 14.

To see Christ, therefore, is to believe in Him; as covenanting in our name, dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification. It is what the Apostle styles *Looking unto Jesus**, for Life and Salvation, and throwing ourselves upon Him as the *Author and Finisher*, the Beginner and Perfecter of *Faith* and *Holiness*, *Safety* and *Happiness*.—Such a Sight of Christ will,

i. Make us *vile*, and keep us *low*, *in our own Eyes*. Nothing humbles the Soul, like a spiritual View of Him who, though he was rich, yet, for our sakes, became poor, that we, through His Poverty, might be made rich. How the World lessens, and all it's fading Honors darken, on the Eye of *Faith*! How is *Self* annihilated, how is *Pride* hid from Man, under the Shinings of the *MEDIATOR's Majesty and Meekness*! A Believing Sight of HIM is the only source, whence Evangelic Repentance can flow. *True REPENTANCE* (as I once heard an Excellent Friend observe)

* *Heb.* xii. 2. Αφορωντις, literally, *Looking off*, *Looking away from*, *withdrawing the Eye*: looking off from every other Object; confining our views to HIM alone; bottoming the whole Weight of our Confidence, and laying the entire Stress of our Dependence, on his Blood and Obedience. *Looking off*, above all, from *our own Works*: from our *sinful Works*, in Point of Discouragement; and from our *good Works*, in Point of Reliance. This it is to *look off* and to *look away unto Jesus*.

is the *Tear of FAITH*: and as the *Eye* must exist, previously to the *Tear* it sheds; so must *Faith* be wrought in the *Heart*, e'er true *Repentance* weeps. When God made a peculiar Discovery of Himself to the Soul of *Job*; what was its Effect on that holy Man? *I abhor myself*, said he, *and repent in Dust and Ashes**. — *They shall look unto me, whom they have pierced and MOURNT*, says God: First *look*, and then *mourn*; first *believe*, and then *repent*. The *Rock* is first *smitten*, and then the *Waters flow*: the Almighty *Sun of Righteousness* must point the Beams of His converting Power upon the Soul, and THEN a gracious *Melting* ensues; the Frost breaks, the Ice dissolves, and the vanquish'd Sinner, who was sometime afar off, is brought nigh by the *Blood of Christ*. The Devout Mr. Henry has, if I remember right, a Remark to this Effect: “ If Christ had not “ *look'd upon Peter*, Peter had not wept. *Peter's* “ *Tears flow'd first from the Eyes of Christ.*” Grace alone can work *Repentance* unto Life. Only the Sight of a broken, Bleeding Savior, can give a broken, bleeding Heart. When we hear of the Death of a *Stranger*; we are seldom very deeply affected: but when we read of the Death of a *beneficent Friend*, or of a loving and beloved *Relation*; our Relentings are kindled, and our Eyes

* *Job xlvi. 5, 6.*† *Zech. xii. 10.*

overflow.

overflow. So the Death of Christ makes but a slight Impression on the Heart, consider'd merely as an *Historical Event*: but when the Christian is made to see that it was his everlasting *Friend*, who dy'd; and that he dy'd, moreover, for *his* particular Salvation; 'tis such Looking, that produces godly sorrow. Jesus need but shew Himself to a Sinner, and the Sinner falls before Him. *Veni, vidi, vici*, may be inscrib'd by the Savior on every Monument of Grace, on every converted Soul: I *came* to the Sinner, I *look'd* upon him; and, with a Look of Omnipotent Love, I *overcame* Him.

2. A sight of Christ will cause us to value and rest upon *His Righteousness*. Be not deceiv'd, O Man. Call not thyself a Christian, think not thyself a *Believer*, if thou dost not depend on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ, and upon THAT alone, for Justification and Acceptance with God. You can never appear before the Tremendous Judge of All, in an *home-spun* Suit, in a Righteousness of *your own* weaving. You must be cloath'd, from head to foot, out of God's own Wardrobe. You must have the *Obedience* of JESUS CHRIST, that only *Wedding Garment* wherein you can possibly stand with Safety, or lift up your Head with Joy. God the Father must give it you by Imputation: God the Holy Spirit must apply and put in on you, by Grace: and

and you must *wrap* it about you by Faith;
Phil. iii. 9.

Free-will and *Self-Righteousness* are the *Noli nos tangere* of almost every unconverted Man. As to *Free-will*, he deems it high-Treason against the Dignity of human Nature, to have it so much as question'd: and for *Self-Righteousness*, he hugs it as a Bosom-Idol. *Ministers*, with all their Toil, can, at the utmost, but strike off a few imperceptible Grains from this Double Fortress of Unregeneracy. But when the *Spirit of God* makes an Assault in *Effectual Calling*, the Business is done: a Mine is sprung at the very Foundations; invincible Grace sets Fire to the Train; and the strong Holds are *blown up at once*. So terrible, sometimes, is the Explosion, and so alarming are the Thunderings and Lightnings of the Law; that the new-born Saint hardly knows, in his first Fright, whereabouts he is: the Ruins fly so wide, and fall so thick around him, that he finds himself constrain'd (happy constraint!) to *fly to CHRIST* for shelter from that very *Self-Righteousness*, in which he trusted before. — It may, however, be needful to observe, that *All* God's People do not experience this Violence of Terror. It is not *essential to Conversion*, though God is pleas'd to convert Some in this Manner. Many are *led to Christ*, by the Draw-

ings of His Love; Others are driven by the Terrors of His Law. But, whether driven, or drawn, happy are they that are *caused to approach* Him! Accomplish'd either way, Regeneration is, in Itself, one and the same Blessing. If you see yourself to be lost, unless you have Interest in the Atonement and Righteousness of Christ; 'tis plain you have had a Sight of Christ Himself, to all the Purposes of Safety. — From the Whole, arises a two-fold Caution: (1.) Let not those who experience much of *the Terrors of the Lord*, be discourag'd. Complain not that your Convictions and Distress continue *so long*. The longer you are under the Hands of your Heavenly Surgeon, the Sounder will be your Cure at last. (2.) If you have *not* felt the Horrors and Agonys of Soul, which some others have, don't deem yourself unregenerate, merely on that Account. If you feel the Impossibility of being saved by the Works of the Law, or by your own Righteousness; and if you desire to be found in Christ alone, to derive all your Salvation from His Merits, without any Mixture of your own Goodness, Faithfulness, or Strength; I dare assert, that you are *born of God*. Instead, therefore, of calling thy Conversion in Question, be *thankfull to God*, that He has healed and restor'd thy Soul, without putting thee to that Pain in the Process, which Multitudes

titudes of thy Fellow Believers have experienc'd: —See but Christ, as the only way of God's Salvation, and you have seen enough to make you safe and holy, humble and happy.

3. A Sight of Him never fails to be follow'd by a *Life* and *Conversation* correspondent to the Gospel of Christ. As, from a view of God's external Works, we are sensible of his *creating Power*; so by the inward and outward Marks of Grace, shining *in* us and *upon* us, we may know that He has begun the great Work of the *new Creation* within. An Evangelical Regard to the whole Compass of *Moral Duty*, is a Sign that our Profession is genuine: just as we may infer the Purity of Silver, from the *Tower-Stamp*. This, then, is one Note, whereby to distinguish between the *precious* and the *vile*. Unbelievers trust in good Works, without *doing* any: the true Believer *does* good Works, without trusting in 'em. *These Things I will*, said the Apostle, *that thou affirm constantly, that they, who have BELIEVED in God, be carefull to maintain GOOD WORKS.* “He that hath *Clothes*,” says the admirable Mr. GURNALL*, “will surely *wear them*, and not be “seen *naked*. Men talk of their Faith, Repentance, and Love to God. These are precious “Graces: but why do not such Persons let us

* *Christian Armor*, Vol. 1. p. 87.

" see these Graces walking abroad in their daily
 " Conversation? Surely, if such Guests were in
 " thy Soul, they'd look out at the Windows, and
 " be seen, out of Doors, in the Exercise of holy
 " Dutys."

Alexander the Great had a Soldier in his Army,
who bore the same Name, but was a notorious
Coward. Either be Courageous, said the King to
him, or cease to bear the Name of ALEXANDER. O
Professor, either lead a holy Life, or cease to call
thyself a Churchman, cease to call thyself a Christian.—*XENOCRATES of Chalcedon was, one Day,*
giving a Lecture on Philosophy, at Athens. In
the midst of his Dissertation, enters a Youth of
Quality (one of the Bucks of that Age), named
Polemon, just come from a Debauch, " high-
" flown with Insolence and Wine," and wearing
(as the Custom then was, on festive Occasions) a
Chaplet of Flowers on his Head. He no sooner
caught the Eye of Xenocrates, than the latter im-
mediately turn'd his Discourse to Morals; and
reason'd with such Dignity, Propriety, and Force,
that the young Nobleman began to look serious;
and Seriousness settled him into a fix'd Attention.
As the Philosopher proceeded, Polemon felt the
Risings of Remorse: and, e'er the Dissertation was
concluded, he was struck with Shame and Horror
at the Conscious Review of his past Conduct. He
slid

did the Chaplet from his Head ; muffled his Face in his Robe ; resolv'd on a Change of Manners ; and actually became from that Day forward, a Pattern of *Wisdom* and *Virtue*. In Process of Time, he even rose into a Philosopher, of no small Distinction ; and at last succeeded *Xenocrates* in the Care of his Pupils.—If the Remonstrances of an *Heathen* Moralist could have such Effect on the Heart and Life of a profest Libertine ; how much more will the Influence of the HOLY SPIRIT teach true Believers to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, justly, and religiously in the present World !

4. A Sight of Christ will conduce to make our *Affections* heavenly and spiritual. We shall, particularly, resemble Christ in His passive *Resignation to the Will and Providence of God**:

Accomplish

* “ When the Treaty of Marriage was on Foot between the then Prince of *Wales* (afterwards *Charles I.*) and the Infanta of *Spain* ; the Earl of *Bristol*, our Ambassador at the Court of *Madrid*, was so greatly perplexed, on account of the Treaty's not going on to his Mind, that he lost Several Night's Sleep. A Gentleman of his Bed-Chamber observing his Un-easiness, address'd him thus : *My Lord, you are exceedingly anxious and restless. I beseech you to consider that the World was well govern'd, for more than 5000 Years, before You was born ; and it will be as well govern'd when you are Dead. I pray you, then, be not troubled at any Thing ; but refer the Issue to God.*—The Earl was struck with the Propriety of this Seasonable Ex-postulation, and set his Heart at Rest.

Our

Accomplish in me, on me, and by me, all the pleasure of thy Goodness; will be our Heart's Desire and Prayer, in Proportion as we have seen and believed in Him, who came down from Heaven not *to do His own Will, but the Will of Him who sent Him.* — The most remarkable and astonishing Instance of *human* Resignation, I ever remember to have met with, is to be found in the Conduct of the exemplary Arch-Bishop Fenelon. When his illustrious and hopefull Pupil (the Duke of Burgundy, if I mistake not) lay dead in his Coffin, and the Nobles of his Court, in all the Pomp of Silent Sadness, stood weeping round; the Arch-Bishop came into the Apartment: and, having fixed his Eyes, for some Time, on the Corpse; broke out, at length, in Terms to this Effect: “ There lies my Beloved Prince, for whom my Affection was equal to the tenderest Regard of the tenderest Parent. Nor was my Affection lost: He loved me, in Return, with the Ardor of a Son. There He lies; and all my worldly Happiness lies dead with Him. BUT, if the *Turning of a Straw* would call Him back to *Life*; I would not,

Our Way, to *Tranquility*, is, to do likewise: to trace up Things to their Source, *Divine Providence*; and there to leave them.”

Dr. Arrowsmith’s Chain of Princ. p. 470.
“ for

" for Ten Thousand Worlds, be the Turner of
" that Straw, in opposition to the Will of God."

5. If we have had a Spiritual View of Christ, we shall *love and study his Holy Word*. Christ crucified is the central Point, wherein the Lines of both Testaments co-incide. They *testify of Me*, said the Son of God. They testify the Greatness of His *Person*, the Greatness of His *Love*, and the unspeakable Greatness of His *descending Humility*: they bear witness to the Glory of His *Covenant*, the Necessity and Perfection of His *Righteousness*, the Merit of His *Propitiation*, and the Prevalency of His *Intercession*; the Efficacy of His *Grace*, and the Freeness of His *Salvation*. And yet, though the Scriptures were dictated by His Spirit, and hold the Lamp to Knowledge and Happiness, how many cast the precious Charter behind their Backs, or even trample it under their Feet! " Though," as One expresses it, " God Himself has vouchsafed to commence Authors, how Few will so much as give His Works the Reading!" — The renown'd *Scipio Africanus* hardly ever had *Xenophon's Writings* out of his Hand. *Alexander the Great* made *Homer's Poems* his constant Companion. *St. Chrysostom* was so fond of *Aristophanes' Comedies*, that he even laid them under his Pillow when he slept. Our matchless *Alfred* constantly carried

ried Boëthius *de Consol. Phil.* in a Fold of his Robe. Tamerlane (if I rightly remember) always carried about with him the History of Cyrus. Bishop Jewel could recite all Horace: and Bishop Sanderson, all Tully's Offices. The Italians are said to be such Admirers of Tasso, that the very Peasants sing him by heart, as they pursue their Country Labors. The famous Leibnitz could repeat, even in extreme old Age, the greatest Part of Virgil: and one of the late Popes is said to have learned English, purely for the Sake of reading *The Spectator* in it's original Language. How warmly does Horace recommend the Study of the Greek Writers, to the Roman Youth! *Nocturnâ versate Manu, versate diurnâ.*—How, then, ought Christians to study THE BOOK OF GOD! Beza, at upwards of Eighty Years of Age, could repeat the Whole of St. Paul's Epistles, in the original Greek, and all the Psalms in Hebrew: and, more lately, the Learned Witius, even at a very advanc'd Period of Life, could recite almost any Passage of Scripture, in it's proper Hebrew or Greek, together with the Context, and the Criticisms of the best Commentators. How will such Persons rise in Judgment against the negligent Professors, the many Superficial Divines, and the flimsy Infidels, of the present Day! Time has been, when the Word of

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the Lord was *precious* in this Land: So precious, that (in the Reign of *Henry VIII.* if I mistake not) an honest Farmer once gave a Cart-load of Hay for one Leaf of *St. James's Epistle in English.* Now, indeed, through the Goodness of God, the *Manna* of His Word lies, in abundance, round our Tents. But what is the Consequence? Most of us are for reading *any* Book, except *That* which can make us *wise to Salvation.* We disrelish even the Bread of Life: I almost said, we spurn it away with our Feet. Hence our spiritual Declensions. Hence the *Arminianism*, the *Socinianism*, the *Deism*, and every other pernicious *ism* of the Age. As many of our young *Clergymen*, 'tis to be fear'd, subscribe Articles and Homilys they have never read; so *Myriads* of the *Laity* profess to believe the *Inspir'd Volume*, which they seldom or never open. Hence they themselves lie open to admit the first *Errors* that offer, and to be run away with by any *Immorality* that most easily besets them. The Bible is God's *Epistle* to Mankind: and what greater Affront can be shewn even to an *earthly Friend*, than to throw by his *Letters* unopen'd and unread? — May we not address the Generality of Christians so call'd, in the Words of Mr. *Boston*? “ The *Dust*, on “ one Hand, or the *Finery*, on the other, about

" your Bibles, is a witness now, and will, at the
 " last Day, be a witness of the Enmity of your
 " Hearts against Christ as a Prophet*."

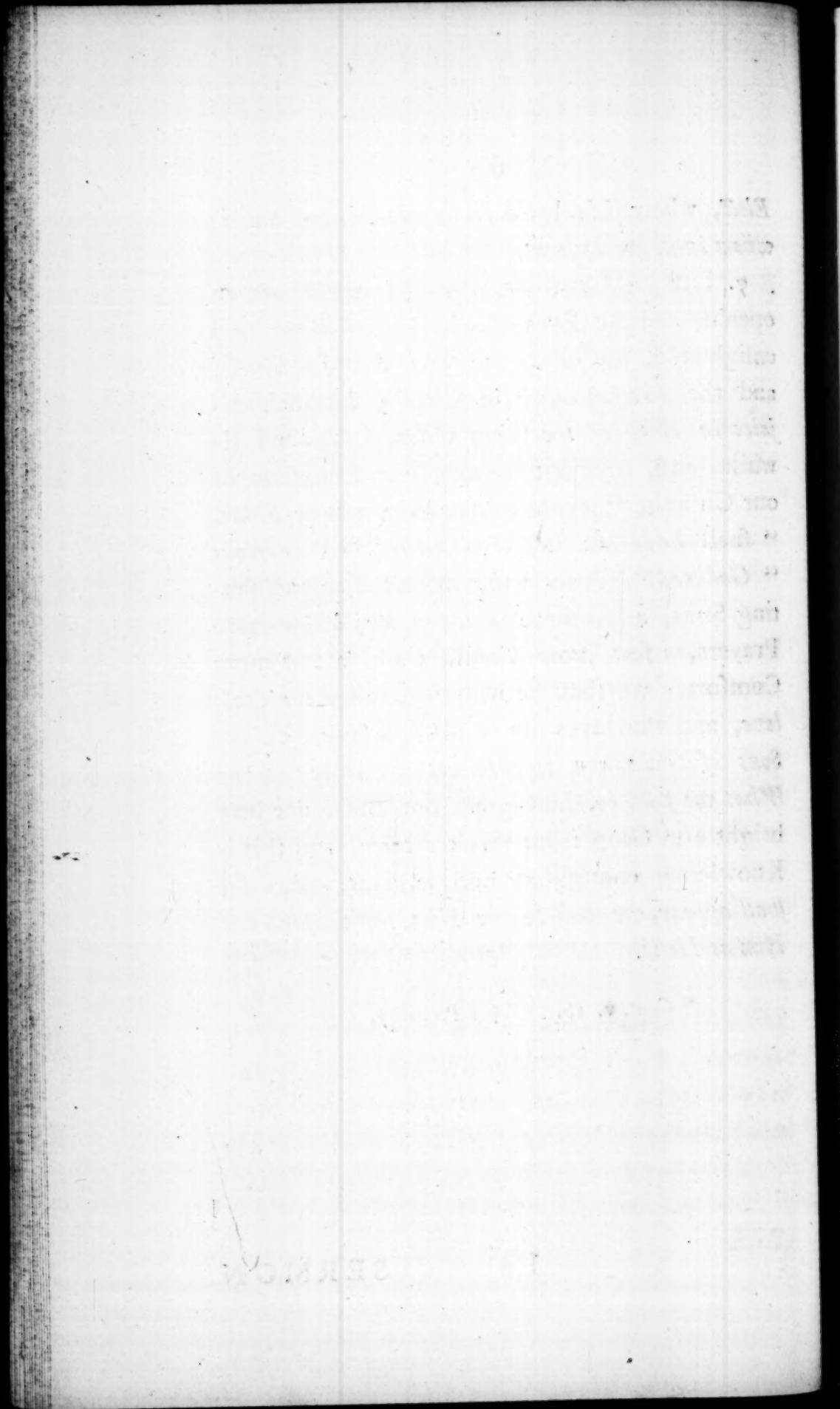
6. A true Sight of *Christ* will inspire and expand our Hearts with genuine *Benevolence*, and make us the Well-wishers of all Mankind. God, the Great Sovereign who *giveth no Account, to any, of His Matters*, may set what Limits He pleases to the Communications of His Grace, as we see He does to the Bountys of his Providence. But *we*, as social Beings, are under a moral Obligation, as we have Opportunity, to do good unto all Men. Christian Benevolence may be resembled to the Shining of the *Sun*; which magnificent Luminary sheds it's Warmth at large, and rises with general Healing in it's Wings, so that nothing is entirely hid from the Heat thereof: yet there are some Climates, where it's Beams operate more strongly, than in Others. In like manner, our *Good-will* should be universal; tho' it's highest Actings ought to terminate on the *Household of Faith*. God Himself deigns to set us the Example. He is, providentially, Loving unto every Man, and his Mercys, in a way of temporal Bounty, are, more or less, over all his Works: yet His choicest Favors terminate on His own

* *Four-fold State*, p. 82.

Elect, whom He lov'd from everlasting, and in whom is all his Delight.

7. Lastly ; Let those, whose Hearts have been open'd, and the Eyes of whose Faith have been enlighten'd, by Grace, to SEE the *Loveliness** and the *Preciousness†* of Christ ; let Such rejoice in *Hope of the Glory of God*. Yet a little while, and, to adopt the excellent Language of our Church, “ *we, who know Him now by Faith, shall have the full Fruition of His Glorious Godhead.*” After a few more Rising and Setting Suns, a few more Sermons, and a few more Prayers, a few more Conflicts and a few more Comforts; we shall be with *Him whom our Souls love*, and who loves our Souls. Now are we the Sons of God ; and it doth not yet fully appear What we shall be, how great our Bliss, nor how bright our Glory: but this we know, and this is Knowledge enough at present, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall SEE Him as He is.

* *Cant. v. 16.* † *1 Pet. ii. 7.*



S E R M O N III.

G O D's *Mindfullness of M A N.*

He will ever be mindfull of His Covenant. Psal. cxi. 5.

The Lord hath been mindfull of us; He
will bless us. Psal. cxv. 12.

W E R M O N

G O D, A M Y

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P S A L M viii. 4.

What is Man, that Thou art mindfull of him? and the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him?

*D*AVID is suppos'd, by Some, to have written this Psalm, long before his Elevation to the Jewish Throne; while he was yet a Youth, busy'd in tending his Father's Cattle on the Plains of *Bethlehem*. And we shall presently see, that there are Passages, in the Psalm itself, which seems to justify this Conjecture. It is not only an Hymn of Praise, address'd to the *MESSIAH*; but likewise, one of the finest *Pastorals*, any where extant.

*D*avid appears to have had, almost from his very childhood, the sublimest Talents for *Poetry*, and an exquisite Taste in *Music*. His *Harp*, therefore, was, probably, his frequent Companion in the Fields, when he exercis'd the Occupation of a Shepherd. And having experienc'd the inestimable Blessing of *early Conversion*, he did not debase his Poetic Genius, nor prostitute his Skill in the Harmony of Sounds, by devoting Either of them to the contemptible Purposes of *versify'd Nonsense*.

Nonsense and unmanly Dissipation ; but his *Heart* being as rightly tun'd as his *Harp*, his Happiness and highest Recreation were, to sing the Praises of the God he lov'd, and to anticipate something of that sublime Employ, on Earth, which will, in **Heaven**, be, forever, the Business and the Bliss of Those who are *redeem'd from among Men.*

'Tis worthy of Remark, that *This* was the Time (namely, while *David* was Herdsman to his Father *Jesse*, and fill'd up the Intervals of his Employment with holy Meditation, Prayer, and Thanksgiving), when God Himself vouchsaf'd to mention him under the most glorious Appellation that, perhaps, was ever conferr'd on a created Being ; A *Man after my own Heart**. A Title, which does not

appear

* 1 Sam. xiii. 14. with Acts xiii. 22.—This celebrated Periphrasis has occasion'd no little Disquisition. The Learned *Grotius*, with his usual Dryness, thinks it to be synonymous with *electum de Populo*, or *chosen out from among the People* : i. e. God calls DAVID a *Man after his own Heart*, because He had made Choice of him to be King of Israel.—*Vatablus* renders the Phrase by *Qui mibi Cordi est*, a *Man whose Interest God had at Heart*.—But, surely, the lowest Sense, which can be justly assigned to this exalted Title, is, that David should (as the Apostle adds, in the above Passage) *fullfill πάντα τα θεληματα, all the Wills*, Purposes and Designs of God, respecting the Government of Israel : viz. by supplanting the Family of *Saul*; extending the Jewish Territory; maintaining the Religion of the True God; and laying the Foundation of a more splendid Worship, by preparing Materials for the Erection of the Temple.—For my own Part, however, I think, that the Words

include

appear to have been given him, so much as once, after his Advancement to Royalty. For though neither *Height* of Magnificence, nor *Depth* of Abasement, can separate a Saint from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus*; yet, even after a work of Grace has passed upon the Heart in Regeneration, such is the Power of surviving Depravity, that not one, perhaps, in Twenty, of God's People, can, humanly speaking, be trusted with Prosperity. Let every *afflicted* Believer, therefore, rejoice in that he is made low. God deals out our Comforts and our Sorrows, with exact, unerring Hand, in number, weight, and measure. Hence, we have not, either of Joy or Adversity, a Grain too little or too much. If less Tribulation would suffice, less would be given. We are bad enough, with all our Troubles: what then should we be, if we were exercis'd with *none*?

In order to our entering into the true Spirit and Propriety of the Psalm before us: we must form to ourselves an Idea of *David* the Stripling: and think we see him, watching his Flocks, in a Summer's Night, under the expanded Canopy of the

include something more and higher: namely, that *David* was an Object of God's eminent and peculiar Favor; destin'd to be a signal Instance of the Sovereignty of Divine Providence, and, in much of his Conduct, a Shining Pattern of Grace. A Man, in short, whom the Deity loved, and was determin'd to honor.

* Rom. viii. 39.

Skys.—The *Air* is still. The *Heavens* are serene. The Moon, arriv'd at the Full, is persuing her majestic, silent Course. The *Stars* (like Peeresses on a Coronation-Solemnity) assume their brightest Robes, to attend the beauteous Sovereign of the Night, while both Moon and Stars concur to shed a soft undazzling Lustre on all the subjacent Land-schape.—DAVID, at this happy Period, a blameless Youth; unpoison'd with Ambition, and unfascinated by the Witch-craft of Court-Corruption; his *Heart* unpolluted with Lust, and his *Hands* undipp'd in Blood; is seated on a rising Hillock, or on the protuberant Root of some stately Tree.—All is hush'd. Not a *Bough* rustles. Not a *Leaf* “trembles to the Breeze.” The silent *Flocks* are either carelefsly grazing by his Side, or slumbering securely at his Feet. The *Birds* have suspended their Songs, 'till wak'd by the superior Sweetness of his *Voice*, and the *Music* of his Hand. For, charm'd with the Loveliness of the Scene, and wrapt by the Holy Spirit into a Seraphic Flame of exalted Devotion, he has lain aside his *Crook*—he has taken up his *Harp*—and is transmitting, to the Throne of God, these gratefull, these inexpressibly beautifull Strains of admiring Thankfullness: *when I consider thy Heavens, the work of Thy Fingers; the Moon and the Stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is Man that Thou*

ert

art mindfull of him, or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him?—Then, taking a Survey of the pleasing Objects that surrounded him, he thus goes on to sing: Thou hast made Man a little lower than the Angels, and hast crowned him with Glory and Honor. Thou madest him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands; Thou hast put all Things under his Feet; all Sheep and Oxen, yea, and the Beasts of the Field; the Fowls of the Air, and the Fishes of the Sea, and whatsoever walketh through the Paths of the Seas. O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is thy Name in all the World!

So warbled the sweet Singer of Israel, and thus he addressed GOD the SON, almost eleven Hundred Years prior to His Incarnation. For, that the Psalm, in it's highest Import, refers to Christ, is evident from *Mattb. xxi. 16.* and, especially, from the Second Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where a considerable Part of the Psalm is cited by the Apostle, and expressly apply'd to the adorable Mediator between God and Men.

Jesus, consider'd as a Divine Person, is *Jehovah our Governor*, whose Name, i. e. whose Manifestations of infinite Wisdom, Beneficence and Power, in a way both of Creation and Providence, are excellent throughout all the Earth.—He set His Glory above the Heavens, or rendered the Riches of His Love more signally and illustriously noble than

the brightest and noblest of His material Works, when he entered into Covenant with the FATHER and the SPIRIT, and graciously stipulated to wear our Nature, and to bear away our Sins. In the Fullness of Time, after He had actually accomplish'd His double Warfare of Obedience and Sufferings; He, literally, set His Glory above the Heavens, when he ascended up on high, and His glorify'd Humanity took Possession of it's Throne, Angels and Authoritys and Powers being made subject unto Him.

He it is, who displays the Efficacy, the Sovereignty, and the Independency of His Almighty Operation, in bringing to pass the greatest Ends, by, seemingly, the feeblest and most inadequate Means: or (as *David*, evidently alluding to his own tender Age, speaks at the 2d Verse), who has ordained Strength out of the Mouths even of Babes and Sucklings. Arm'd with the Power that cometh from above, the unaccoutr'd Youth had slain a *Lion* and a *Bear**. Inspir'd with supernatural Prowess, the same ruddy Stripling, afterwards, overcame the proud, gigantic Champion of *Philistia*. These Providential Events were, indeed, strange and astonishing. But the Religious Part of *David's Character* was truly *miraculous*. A beardless Lad, not very superior in Years to a

* 1 Sam. xvii, 36.

Babe and Suckling, is exalted, by the Holy Spirit, into a Prophet of the Lord. He testifys of the Savior, many hundred Centurys before the Savior appear'd : and is not only a true Believer in, but a distinguish'd Herald of, that adorable Person, in whom the Elect of all Nations are blessed.

By the Righteousness of His meritorious Life, and by the Atonement of His infinitely precious Death, Jesus " bruis'd the Serpent's Head," or inverted the Subtily, baffled the Power, and defeated the Wish, of that apostate Spirit, who seeks the Destruction of Man: thus silencing the Enemy and the Avenger.—Seek you farther Proofs of the Savior's Dignity and Divinity? not only the Earth, but the Heavens also are the Work of His Fingers, the Monument of His Creating Power. *The Moon and the Stars* are of His ordaining: and, without Him, was not any Thing made that was made. In a word, He was the Builder of the Universe; and He rules the Universe He built. Well, therefore, may we bend the Knee of our Souls before Him, or, rather, fall prostrate in the Dust at His Foot-stool, and ask, *What is Man, that Thou art mindfull of Him?* or *the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him?* If Elizabeth, the Parent of John the Baptist, could say, to the Virgin MARY, *who am I, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* much more

may God's Elect stand astonish'd at His Love, and ask, " what are *we*, that the Lord God of Israel should, in Person, visit His People, and redeem them to the Father by his Blood*?"

In the Text, *Two* Acts of God are, distinctly, pointed out; namely, His *Mindfullness* of us, and His *Visiting* us; which gracious Acts I shall consider, not only as Proofs of the *Messiah's* Love to His People; but, indiscriminately, as Evidences of the Love mutually shewn to Sinners, by *All* the Persons in the Trinity, Father, and Son, and Spirit, the Co-æqual *Three* that bear Record in *Heaven*, are *One*, not only in Nature and Essence, but in the *Good-will* they bear to Man: and their undivided Love calls for our undivided Praise.

I. God's *Mindfullness* of His People is not a Thing of Yesterday. There never was a Period, when He had not our Interests at Heart, *The Mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him*†. It is, like Himself, without Beginning of Days or End of Years. We could not fear Him from everlasting; because we did not exist 'till very lately: but His *Mercy* towards us was co-eternal with Himself. In consequence of This, we are made to fear him in Time. Filial Fear is a Covenant-Blessing, given only to the *Sons and Daughters of the Lord* Al-

* Luke i. 68.

† Psal. ciii. 17.

mighty; who says, *I will put my Fear into their Hearts**. Hence, they shall not depart from Him after Conversion. And thus, His Mercy, as it was FROM everlasting, is TO everlasting upon them that fear Him. It neither began with to-day, nor shall end with to-morrow. But He, who laid the Foundation of their Happiness, in His own Eternal Purpose, shall lay on the Top-Stone with Joy, crying, *Grace, Grace unto it†.* — That God was mindfull of us for good, appears,

(1.) From the *Decree of Election*, whereby we were chosen, in Christ, to *Grace and Glory*, before the World began. This Act of Sovereign Love is the very Source and Fountain-Head of all the other Blessings that are confer'd on the Heirs of Salvation. *Redemption, Justification, effectual Calling, Holiness, Continuance in good Works to the End, and everlasting Happiness in Heaven*; all flow from this leading, capital, fundamental Privilege. *Election is the Tree of Life*, whose *Leaves and Fruit are for the Healing of the Nations*: For, whom God did predestinate, them [ταῦτα, those very Persons] He also called; and whom He called, them [ταῦτα, those very Persons] He also justified; and whom He justify'd, them [ταῦτα, those very Persons] He also glorify'd ‡.

* *Jer. xxxiii. 40.* † *Zech. iv. 7.* ‡ *Rom. viii. 30.*

There are Some, who talk much concerning the *Dignity of human Nature.* Upon *Christian Principles*, the Dignity of Man is great indeed: a Dignity, however, not *natural*, but *deriv'd* from the condescending Lover and Restorer of lost Sinners. That GOD should be mindfull of Men, prior to their Being; that GOD should settle the Inheritance of Heaven on His Children, e'er Suns gave Light, or Planets mov'd; that GOD should write the *Name*, of the meanest Saint, in the *Book of Life*, with the Pen of *everlasting Love*; that He should *appoint* them, *not to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*; is a Consideration, that inspires the believing Soul with the most sublime and astonishing Views of that Goodness, which not only gave apostate Men the Preference to Apostate Angels, but exalted the Church of God to a State of Dignity and Glory unexperienc'd even by the Angels that never fell.—May we, by the *Holiness of our Lives*, be enabled to give substantial Proof of our Interest in His Electing Favor; and be living Exemplars of that inestimable Declaration and Promise, *This People have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth My Praise**.

(2.) God shew'd His *Mindfullness* of us, in the *Covenant of Redemption*, made with his SON and

* *Isa. xlvi. 21.*

SPIRIT, before all Worlds, for the Recovery of His Church and People, who, it was known, would fall by *Iniquity*. For, it would infinitely detract from the Dignity of Christianity, to imagine, that the Plan of Redemption was a *temporary Expedient*, hurry'd up on a sudden, and fetch'd in, *ex improviso*, to remedy an unforeseen Disaster: as if the Deity, upon a *Disappointment* of His Views, and an unlucky *Disconcertment* of his Measures, had recourse, *pro Re natâ*, to the best *Salvo* that the Exigence of Affairs suggested. Such an Idea of *God* and *Religion* can never, I should imagine, be coolly admitted by any Thinking Person. And yet this View of Things must be admitted, if we reject the Scripture-Account of the *Eternal Covenant* of Grace and Redemption.

There can be no *Succession*, in the Knowledge of God. He, whose *Understanding is infinite*, cannot know *That* now, which He did not *always* know. Men, indeed, grow wise by Observation and Experience. But Eternity itself can add no *Improvement* to the Knowledge of that all-wise, all-comprehending MIND, to whom all Futurity is open, "from whom no Secrets are hid;" and who holds, in His own Hand, the entire Chain of Second Causes.—These are *First Principles*, equally inculcated by *Reason*, the Religion of Nature; and by *Christianity*, the Religion of the Bible. It would lead me too far, should I, at present, per-

sue the Argument in its Amplitude and Extent. Enough, I apprehend, has been observed, to justify my Laying down *This*, for an undoubted Axiom, that *Adam's Apostacy, and all the Consequences of it, were, from everlasting, FORE-SEEN and FORE-KNOWN of God; who, for Reasons we cannot See, DECREED to PERMIT it.* And I defy the ablest Advocates of Revelation, to defend the Christian Religion, clearly and solidly, upon *any other Principle.*—*God's Decreeing, or Resolving, to permit the Fall, did not, however, make Him the Author of it;* for He can neither tempt nor be tempted to Sin. But, had He not determin'd to permit the Lapse of our first Parents, He could not have *fore-known* it (for, without such a permissive Determination, the Event had been *uncertain*; and uncertainty of Event can be no Basis for certain Prescience): and, had He not *foreknown* it, He could not have *made Provision, before-hand, in the Covenant of Grace, for the Restoration of Sinners:*—not to ask, where would have been His *Omniscience?*

I conclude, then, with the Scriptures, that, upon a certain Fore-sight of the Fall, *Grace was given us in Christ before the World began**: which could only be given us, so very early, in virtue of a *Covenant made with Christ, as the fœderal Head, Trustee, and Representative of His People.*—

* 2 Tim. i. 9.

To Abraham and to his Seed, i. e. to all, who should be endu'd with that Faith which is the Gift and Operation of God, were the Promises made: He saith not, unto SEEDS, as of many; as if the Promises of Grace and Salvation had been made to the Elect, in their own proper Persons (for that would have been impossible, seeing they had then no personal Existence); but as of ONE, And to thy SEED, which is CHRIST. To Christ, therefore, were the Promises of the Father made, in Behalf of all His Believing People. And this could only be done in that Covenant of Peace, which was between them both.—Nor,*

(3.) Did God intermit His gracious *Mindfulness* of Man, when (as observ'd above), for Reasons unknown to us, it was his mysterious Pleasure *actually* to permit the Fall of *Adam*. — We have a saying, in common Life, that *Prevention is better than Recovery*. But, in the present Question, the Proverb fails. Satan neither *stole* nor forced his way into Paradise. He neither escap'd the *Notice*, nor master'd the *Power*, of HIM whose Presence filleth Heaven and Earth. *Omniscience* cannot be deceiv'd. *Omnipresence* cannot be eluded. *Omnipotence* cannot be overpower'd. With Regard, therefore, to the first Entrance of Moral and of Natural Evil; both One and the Other would,

* Gal. iii. 16.

most certainly, have been totally precluded, by a Deity possessed of infinite Wisdom and Power, had not *Recovery* (though we cannot yet discern How) been better than *Prevention*.—The *Keeper of Israel*, who *neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*, was invariably *mindfull* of His People, even when He suffer'd Human Nature to be shipwreck'd in *Adam*. Nay, presently after that mysterious Event, JEHOVAH the SON shew'd His *Mindfullness* of His Covenant and of Us, by condescending to be, Himself, the *First Preacher* of the Everlasting Gospel: for, He did not dismiss our Parents from Paradise, 'till He had solemnly and graciously assur'd 'em, that *The Seed of the Woman*, the Messiah, born of a Virgin-Mother, should, at the appointed Time, destroy the Works of the Devil, and restore the Objects of Divine Love to more than the Glory they had lost.

(4.) God, moreover, testifys His *Mindfullness* of His fallen People, by His Patience with 'em, and His *Providential Care* of 'em, during their whole *State of Unregeneracy*. A late eminent Person us'd frequently to say, that “ Every faithfull Minister is *immortal* 'till his work is done;” and it may as truly be asserted, of every Elect Sinner, that He is *immortal*, 'till he is *born again*. 'Tis impossible, that any of God's People should dye in their Sins: for *whom He did predestinate, them*

He

He also called; and Christ's Sheep must be brought home to Him in Regeneration. Hence, the Apostle Jude, writing to Believers in general, assures them, that they had been *sanctify'd*, or set apart, by God the Father, and *PRESERVED in Jesus Christ, and CALLED†*: or, as it may be render'd, *preserved FOR JESUS CHRIST; Preserved*, by Providence, in order to be effectually *called* and converted by Grace: of which we have a striking Instance in the Jaylor at *Philippi*, Acts xvi. 27—31. If we chuse more *modern* Proof of this important Truth, some very remarkable Passages in the Life of Colonel *Gardiner*, prior to his Conversion, may tend to convince us of it. Nay, there is, perhaps, hardly a single Believer on Earth, who, if he looks back on the Days that are past, cannot recollect some signal and eminent Deliverances from Peril and Death, which he experienced in the Course of Providence, long enough before he was savingly turn'd to God. How often, when either *Sickness* has level'd the Dart; or when sudden and unlook'd for *Danger* stood with the lifted Weapon, ready, in appearance, to hew us down; has an Hand, unseen, turn'd aside the Stroke, and a Voice, unheard, pronounc'd us *Repriv'd from Death!* So care-*

* Rom. viii, 30. John x. 16.

† Jude 1.

full is the *Lord of the Harvest*, not to reap his People, 'till he has *ripen'd 'em* !

(5.) After God has brought His Children to the Saving Knowledge of Himself, by the Effectual Call of His Holy Spirit ; His *Mindfullness* of them appears, farther, in his maintaining the Work of Grace he has begun, and carrying them on, inamissibly and invincibly, till they receive the *End of their Faith*, even the full and final *Salvation of their Souls*. Our *Faithfullness* to GOD procedes from God's *Mindfullness* of Us. He it is, that preserves us safe amidst the Corruption of our own Hearts, the Temptations of Satan, and the Afflictions and Allurements of the World. *Grace* in the Soul resembles a glimmering *Taper*, exposed to all the Storms that blow, yet unextinguish'd, and extinguishable. Wherefore may it defy the Force of descending Rains, and the Fury of conflicting Winds ? because it is fed and guarded by the unseen Hand of HIM, who is ever *mindfull of His Covenant*, and of His Covenant-People. Nor, 'till *He fails, can they*. *Because I live, says He, Ye shall live also.*—Surely, then, we have the highest Reason to breathe, from the Inmost of our Hearts, that self-abasing, that Grace-admiring Question, *What is Man, That thou art mindfull of Him ?* To which we may add,

Idly. Or the Son of Man, that Thou VISITEST him? for, not only His Mindfullness, but His gracious Visitations, in consequence of that Mindfullness, challenge our deepest Wonder, and our warmest Praise.

In a very particular Manner might God be said to visit us, when *Jehovah* the Son was manifested in the Flesh — *Will God indeed dwell with Men?* said Solomon, at his Dedication of the Temple. Yes, may we reply, on the present Festival: God did indeed dwell with Men, that Men might for ever dwell with God. The Brightness of His Father's Glory, and the express * Image of His Person; He, who made and upholds all Things by the Word of his Power, condescended in His great Humility to visit Earth; that Sinners might be, not transitory Visitants, but everlasting Inhabitants of the highest Heavens. And, though He is now enter'd on his glorify'd State above, He still vouchsafes, invisibly and spiritually, to visit his People below.

He visits them in Conversion, as He once literally visited the Tomb of Lazarus; and, by the effectual Agency of His Spirit, calls to Him-

* Express Image, Heb. i. 3. — I should not scruple to render the Word χαρακτήρ by exact Counterpart: as Wax (from whence the Metaphor seems to be taken) bears the very Figure, and is therefore the exact Counterpart, of the Seal or Stamp by which it is impress'd.

*self whom he will**, and quickens those who are *Dead in Trespasses and Sins†.* For this unspeakable Blessing, Man is, singly and solely, indebted to *Efficacious Grace.* 'Tis NOT of Him that WILLETH, nor of him that RUNNETH; 'tis not owing to human Pliableness, nor human Works, but it is only of God that sheweth Mercy ‡.—AFTER I was TURNED, I repented, is the Language of God's Book ||, and the Experience of God's People. We are, FIRST, Turned by Him; and, THEN we repent unto Life.—As Christ was born into the World, for Us; so, the visitation of His Grace gives us to experience, what our Church justly stiles, that "*New Birth unto Righteousness,*" which makes us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

Providential Dispensations are also to be consider'd as Visits from God. — Is Affliction the Christian's Lot? 'tis a Visit from Heaven. *Thou hast visited, thou hast try'd me,* says David. God never uses the Flail, but when his Corn wants Threshing.

“ Our Hearts are fasten'd to the World
 “ by strong and various Tyes :
 “ but ev'ry Sorrow cuts a String,
 “ and urges us to rise §.”

* Mark iii. 13.

|| Jer. xxxi. 19.

† Eph. ii. 1.

§ Dr. Young.

‡ Rom. ix. 16.

Afflictions are as *Nails*, driven by the Hand of Grace, which *crucify* us to the World.—The Husbandman *ploughs* his Lands, and the Gardiner *prunes* his Trees, to make 'em fruitfull. The Jeweller *cuts* and polishes his Diamonds, to make 'em shine the brighter. The Refiner flings his Gold into the *Furnace*, that it may come out the purer. And God *afflicts* his People, to make 'em better.—“To thank God for Mercys,” said a pious Divine of the last Century, “is the way to increase them: to thank Him for Miserys, is the way to remove them. Afflictions are then Blessings to us, when we can bless God for Afflictions: whose single View, in causing us to pass through the Fire, is only to separate the Sin He hates from the Soul He loves.” And, in all His Dealings with them, let 'em remember, that, though He cause Grief, yet he will have Compassion: At the worst of Times, He will either suit his Dispensations to their Strength, or accommodate their Strength to his Dispensations. And when the Faith of an afflicted Saint is in Exercise, his Graces, as a good Man expresses it, “resemble a Garden of Roses, or a Well of Rose-water; which, the more they are stirr'd and agitated by the Storm, the Sweeter is the fragrance they exhale.”

I have already touch'd on Deliverances eminent by Providential. May not even common Preserva-

tion and Support, from Moment to Moment, be likewise number'd among the Instances of God's never-ceasing *Mindfulness* and continual *Visitation*?—*By Him*, says the Apostle, *all Things consist*. His Hand directs, His Eye conducts, and His Will sustains, the whole Universe of Spirits, Men, and Things.—With Regard to *Ourselves*, in particular, have we not, each, abundant Cause to admire the uninterrupted Influence and Superintendency * of Him who is our *Life and the Length of our Days*? *Thou hast granted me Life and Favor, and Thy Visitation hath preserved my Spirit* †.

Sanctification, or the Soul's Recovery of God's Spiritual and Moral Image, is a Fruit of the same condescending Goodness. As Redemption from the *Guilt of Sin* is owing to the *past Visitation* of God the Son; so, Exemption from the *Dominion of Sin* results from the *continu'd Visitation* of God the Holy Ghost §. His Transforming Influence

resembles

* “God can arm all his Creatures against sinfull Man. The least, and the meanest of 'em, even a Fly, is able to make an End of us, if God give Commission.”

Mr. PARR, on *Romans*, p. 115.

† *Deut. xxx. 20.*

‡ *Job x. 12.*

§ Is it not equally shocking and deplorable, That, to believe in the Agency of the HOLY SPIRIT, as a *Converter*, *Sanctifier*, and *Comforter*, should be deem'd, by very many reputed Christians, the certain Mark of a *weak, enthusiastic Mind*? Arminians did not always carry Matters to this dread-

full

resembles the Agency of some consummate Painter; who does not *complete* his Pictures at a single Sitting,

full Excess of palpable Irreligion. The Departure from the Doctrines of the Reformation was, for a Time, tolerably gradual. The Deviation, which began toward the latter End of James the 1st's Reign, was so gentle and progressive, that the Church hardly perceiv'd her Descent. In the Reign of his Son *Charles*, Archbishop *Laud* quicken'd her Pace, and, with an high Hand, drove her still farther from Herself.—I do not, however, intend to mark, at present, the several *Waxings* and *Wanings* of *Arminianism*, in our Church and Nation. The Compass of the Subject is too extended, and requires more Latitude than a Note will allow. I shall, therefore, in *this* place, only observe, that We seem, NOW, to be almost got to the Bottom of the Hill. We have, well-nigh, entirely quitted Mount *Sion*, for the *Valley of Hinom*. We seem to be casting off all Regard even to the Modesty of *Appearances*. No longer satisfy'd with *deserting* the Bulwarks, nor with even silently *sapping* the Foundations; Multitudes among us are for openly storming the Citadel: as if it were a Point of settled Emulation, *Who* of us should, on one Hand, run *farthest* from the Doctrinal System of the Church; and, on the other, contribute most vigorously to it's *Demolition*. As one melancholy Proof of This, let us instance in the Doctrine of the Blessed Spirit's Inhabitation. “By receiving the *Holy Spirit*,” some Divines have told us, “is meant *nothing* more than the ‘Acquisition, the Cultivation, and the Practice of Moral Virtue.’” Is not this, Sinking the Religion of Christ ten Degrees below *Heathenism*? for even an Heathen has taught us to distinguish between the *Sacred Influence*, which makes Men good; and the *Goodness*, which is the Fruit of that Influence. A Distinction as obvious, as That of *Cause* and *Effect*. *The FRUIT of the Spirit*, says old fashion'd St. Paul, is *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, &c.* Gal. v. 22.—“*The Spirit of God and Moral Virtue are the same.*” I suppose

Sitting, but gives 'em the gradual Improvements
of his Pencil, till he has touch'd Each of his ele-
gant

suppose, we shall be told next, that the *Atonement*, *Propitiation*,
and *Sacrifice* of Christ, are only other Words for Repentance.
Let us, with the *Clue* of the modern Explication in our Hand,
make Trial of it's Value ; and see, whether it will not lead us
into a Labyrinth of Nonsense and Impiety, instead of extri-
cating us from That of suppos'd Enthusiasm. *Jesus was led
up of Moral Virtue into the Wildernes, to be tempted by the Devil,*
Matth. iv. 1. And he saw Moral Virtue descending like a Dove,
and lighting upon Him, Matth. ii. 16. God is a Moral Virtue,
*John iv. 24. They spake, as Moral Virtue gave them utter-
ance, Acts ii. 4. Then Moral Virtue said to Philip, go near,*
*and join thyself to this Chariot, Acts viii. 29. Ye have receiv-
ed the Moral Virtue of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba! Father.*
Moral Virtue itself beareth Witness with our Virtue, that we
are the Children of God ; Rom. viii. 15, 16. God hath revealed
them to us by his Moral Virtue ; for Moral Virtue searcheth
all Things, even the deep Things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 10. God
hath sent forth the Moral Virtue of his Son into your Hearts,
Gal. iv. 6. The Communione of Moral Virtue be with you all,
2 Cor. xiii. 14.—Apply'd to those Parts of our Church-Offices,
likewise, wherein Mention is made of the *Holy Spirit* ; the *Clue*
will be equally serviceable to the Argument of these *rational*
Expositors —If we do, in true Earnest, wish for the Return
of *Moral Virtue* ; we ourselves must first return to the *Doc-
trines* from whence we are fallen. We must believe them, as
well as *subscribe* them ; and *preach* them, as well as *believe*
them ; and practically *adorn* them, by our own Lives, as well
as *preach* them ; or *Moral Virtue*, which already seems rising
on the Wing, will totally take her Flight.

I will recompence the Religious Reader, for the *Horror*
which the Interpretation, just refuted, must have given him ;
by transcribing Two Passages from the Learned Dr. *Stanhope*,
Dean of Canterbury. Every Body, who knows any Thing of
this

gant Performances into a master-piece of Propriety and Beauty.—*Philip*, King of *Macedon*, is said to have rejoic'd, not so much at his having a Son (*Alexander*) ; as at his Son's having *Aristotle* for a Tutor. A Christian is not so thankfull to God, for the Gift of an Immortal Soul ; as for the still superior Gift of the Sacred Spirit, to renew, to comfort, and to sanctify that Soul, and render it's Immortality a Blessing.

In the *Means of Grace*, also, are the Saints *visited* of God. The Ordinances of the Gospel (such as public and private Prayer, Attendance on the Lord's Table, Reading the Word, and Hearing this respectable Writer, knows that He was, in the main, extremely remote from those of our Establish'd Doctrines, which, Now, go by the Nick-Name of *Calvinism*: a Term, by the way, which, like *Raw-head and Bloody-bones*, seems merely calculated to frighten the *Children of Arminius* from the Bible and the Church.—In Dr. STANHOPE's *Translation of Bishop ANDREWS's Devotions*, this eminent Prelate, and his worthy Translator, thus express themselves: “ *I do also believe, that, by the ILLUMINATION and POWERFUL OPERATION of the HOLY GHOST, a PECULIAR People has been CALLED, from all Quarters of the World, to be knit into one Society, United and Distinguist'd by Belief of the Truth and Holiness of Life.* ” Transl. p. 20. “ *In the HOLY GHOST, I believe a Power, from on high, by Operations, SUPERNATURAL and invisible, but yet with EFFICACY undeniable, TRANSFORMING and RENEWING the Soul to Holiness.* ” Ibid. p. 60.

May my Hearers, my Readers, and myself, experience the Reality of these blessed Truths, *more and more, to the perfect Day !*

it preach'd) are a Kind of *Half-way House*, where God meets and commune with his Children on their Road to Heaven. These are the *Windows* and the *Lattice* *, through which the King of Saints disp'ls Part of his Beauty and Glory to the Eye of Faith. When our King *Edward IV.* had an Interview with *Lewis VIII. of France*, on *Pequigny Bridge*; the Two Monarchs convers'd through a Grate-work of Iron interpos'd between them. In a manner something similar, do Believers, on Earth, carry on their Intercourse with God. They see a little of His Loveliness, and they hear a few comfortable Whispers of His Voice: but still there's a *Barrier* between. Hence, they believe, they hope, they love, they rejoice, they obey, imperfectly: they know but *in Part*, and they are happy but in Part. By and by, the interposing Vail will be entirely *done away*: and, from catching a few occasional Drops of Blessedness, at the Channel of outward Ordinances below; they shall derive, for-ever, the *Fullness* of uninterrupted Joy, from the Fountain-head above. —Sweet, indeed, and inestimably precious, are the minutest, the most glimmering, and most transient Views of Interest in the Father's Electing Grace, and in the unsearchable Merits of Christ. For the Holy Spirit to *visit us with the*

* *Cant. ii. 9.*

Light of his Countenance, and to bless us with the Knowledge of Salvation, by bearing Witness with our Spirits that we are the Children of God; is, at once, the certain Earnest, and the richest Foretaste, of that consummate Bliss, prepared, for the Vessels of Mercy, before the Foundation of the World.—But it may be that you walk in Darkness; that your Views, or even Hopes, of Interest in Christ are few in number, and of short continuance: so that you experience very little of the Holy Spirit's Visitation in a way of Joy and Comfort. This was often the Case with David himself, the Penman of this sweet Psalm: *Even from my Youth up*, says he elsewhere, *by Terrors have I suffered with a troubled Mind.* But let me ask, Did you ever, at any Time, or under any Ordinance, so much as once, experience Fellowship with God, or a Moment's Peace and Joy in believing? If you have, be thankfull for it. 'Twas a Token for Good. 'Twas a Visit from above. God is thine, even tho' (which, however, is unlikely) you should walk in Darkness to your dying Day. He does not tantalize His People: but, having given Thee a Taste of his Love, He will, in his own Way, and in his own Time, satisfy thee with the Fullness of Joy. When we part with an earthly Friend, one of the most embittering Considerations is, that we may, perhaps, see

*his Face no more** below ; enjoy no more of his Company, and receive no more of his Visits. But when the Holy Spirit withdraws the Comforts of his Presence, and is as *One that bides himself*, or as *One that is gone into a far Country*; we may be certain of his Return. His Consolations may *stay long*, but they'll come back at last. You may depend on a fresh Visit, in due season. They, who have felt his gracious Influence *once*, shall feel it *again*.—There is true Ground of Joy, in reflecting even on *past Experiences* (see *Psalm xlvi. 6.*). Communion with God leaves a *Calm* and a *Sweetness* upon the Soul, which are remember'd *after many Days*: as a Vase of rich Perfume, or of odiferous Unguent, scents the Air with Fragrance, even after the Vessel, that contained it, is stop'd up and put by.

Once more. God may be said to *visit* his People, when He *calls them away from Earth to Heaven*. To Them, who are in a State of Grace, *Death* is no more than a friendly *Visit* from the God of Love. “ As a Person” (to use the Comparison of an excellent Writer) “ that takes a “ Walk in his Garden, if he spy a beauteous, “ full-blown Flower, gathers it, and gives it a “ Place in his Bosom; so the Lord takes, as it “ were, his Walks in his Gardens, the Churches, “ and gathers his Lilys, Souls fully ripe for

* *Actz xx. 38.*

“ Glory,

“ Glory, and with Delight takes ‘em to himself.” Not satisfy’d with only deputing his *Angels* to escort Believers to the Sky, He comes **HIMSELF**, in the Manifestations of His Presence, and, as it were, takes ‘em by the Hand, and leads ‘em safe to Zion His Holy Mountain.—What is this World, but a Sort of an *Academy*, wherein God’s Children are plac’d for Education? And, when their Education is finish’d, when they have taken their Degree in Holiness, and are properly qualify’d for Heaven; the Father of Mercy orders out the Chariot of Death, to convey his Children home. From that Hour, He no longer visits *Them*, but they visit *Him*; and are with *Him*, for ever and ever.

O, what a Burst of Joy, what a Scene of *Glory* opens to the ravish’d View, and beams on the triumphant Soul, of a *Saint*, in the Moment of Departure! The Death-bed of a Christian is the Anti-Chamber of Heaven, and the very Suburbs of the *New Jerusalem*.

When the Silver Cords of Life loosen apace;—When the last Pins of the earthly Tabernacle are taking out;—When the Lips of the expiring Saint turn pale, and the Blush forsakes his Cheek; and what little Breath he draws returns cold;—When his Limbs quiver,—When the Pulse forgets to beat,—When the Crimson Current in his

Veins begins to stagnate, and the hovering Soul is just on the Wing for Glory—fast as the World darkens upon his Sight, fast as the *το θνητον, the mortal Part* (*2 Cor. v. 4.*) of his Composition, subsides and falls off from the dis-imprison'd Spirit; he brightens into the perfect Image of God, and kindles into more than an Angel of Light. JEHO-YAH visits him with Smiles of Everlasting Love: JESUS beckons him to the Regions of Eternal Day: the blessed SPIRIT of God wafts him, with a gentle Gale, over the Stream of Death. The Angelic Potentates deem it an Honor to usher the ransom'd Soul, and convoy the precious Freight. Dis embody'd Saints, who were landed long before, throng the blissfull Coast, to congratulate the new-born Seraph on his safe Arrival.—When Virgil enter'd the Roman Theatre, the whole Auditory testify'd their Respect, by rising from their Seats. When a Believer lands in Glory, the whole Church Triumphant may be suppos'd to welcome the new-admitted Peer. He makes a public Entry into the celestial City, the *Jerusalem* which is above. As Joy is in Heaven, when a Sinner repents; so Joy is in Heaven, when a Saint is taken home.

God will, indeed, pay His People *one* visit more, and *but one*. I mean, in the Morning of the *Resurrection*, when He shall re-build their Bodys,

Bodys, into Temples of Perfection, Immortality and Glory. The *Souls* of the Regenerate, from the Instant they take their Flight, are admitted to the Sight and Fruition of His glorious Godhead; and their *Bodys* lye down in the Grave, as a Prince retires to his Ward-robe, or as a Bride withdraws to her Closet, to come forth, with additional Beauty and Lustre, by and by. Like a tender watchfull Parent, God is *Mindfull* of His Elect, while they are fast asleep: and, at the destin'd Season, He will bring them from the *East*, and gather them from the *West*; He will say, to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back; bring my Sons from far, and my Daughters from the Ends of the Earth. Isai. xlivi. 5. Their Dust shall praise Him. All their *Bones* shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee? when That which was sown in Corruption, Weakness, and Dishonor, is rais'd in Incorruption, Power, and Glory. He, who rais'd up Jesus from the Dead, will also quicken your mortal Bodys, by His Spirit that dwelleth in you, Rom. viii. 11. That same Divine Spirit, the Third Person in the Godhead, who, on Earth, quickens and raises the Souls of the Elect from a Death in Sin to the Life of Righteousness; will be-immediately concern'd in requickening their Bodys, the Temples in which He dwells, and to which He is incomprehensibly united even

while

while they lye mouldering in the Grave. *In His Book are all their Members written.* Every Essential Atom of their Dust stands register'd in the Volume of Omnipotence. Every Atom is number'd. Every Atom is precious in His Sight. Nor shall a single Atom be lost. Whatever changes their Bodys may undergo, by a Resolution into their first Principles, or even by Incorporation with other Beings; the constituent Particles requisite to Identity, shall, when the Trumpet sounds, be collected from every Quarter of the Globe, whither they have been scatter'd; or, more justly speaking, *treasur'd up*: for the World is but a vast Store-house, wherein the Dust of the Saints is reposit'd. What tho', for a few Days and Nights, we *lend* our Bodys to the Tomb,

*Join the dull Mass, increase the trodden Soil,
And sleep 'till Earth herself shall be no more?*

the Grave is but a Steward, entrusted with our Ashes, and responsible for the Charge. Soon will the several Elements resign their Deposit, and give back the Loan; the hallow'd Dust of God's Elect: O Death! no longer thine. While their Souls are happy in the converse of Christ and Angels, their Bodys lye refining in the Tomb, 'till the latter have slept away their Dross, that

Bath

Both may be glorify'd together. — I shall only observe further,

1. That God is *mindfull* of His Saints, and visits them in all these Respects, not for any Merit of theirs, but *freely*, and for *his own Name's sake*. He first gives them Grace, and then Glory. He *makes* them Saints, and *crowns* them Angels. "We love Persons and Things", says the excellent Dr. *Arrowsmith*, "because they are "lovely: but God loves his People first, and "makes them lovely afterwards. Our Cause of "Love is in the Objects loved; but the Cause of "God's Love is entirely in Himself. We were "predestinated after the Counsel of His own Will; "Eph. i. 11. not after the prior good Inclinations of our's." — And, indeed, the Text plainly teaches this most important Truth: for, if the Righteous were *beforehand* with God, i. e. if there were any *Goodness* in the Human Will, of which God Himself was not the absolute Author and Efficient; *David* must have ask'd a very *absurd* and a very *beterodox* Question, in saying, *WHAT is Man, that Thou art mindfull of him? or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him?*

2. If *Jehovah* in all His Persons, if Father, Son and Spirit, are thus *mindfull* of Men; O let Men, in return, be *mindfull* of God! *mindfull* of His Truths, *mindfull* of His *Ordinances*, *mindfull*

full of His Love, mindfull of his Word, mindfull of His *Providence*, mindfull of His *Commandments!* I wish every one of You, what I wish for myself; a clear Head, a warm Heart, and an holy Life: a Mind *enlighten'd* into a judicious Knowledge and Perception of the Gospel-Doctrines, in all their Purity, Harmony, and Extent; an Heart *warm'd* with the vital Experience of Grace, with the Love of Christ, and the Consolations of His Spirit; from whence will infallibly proceede, a Life practically devoted to God, and a Conversation adorn'd with every Christian and Moral Virtue.— To this End, let the Psalmist's Prayer be your's. *Be mindfull of ME, O Lord, with the Favor, that thou bearest unto thy People; O visit ME with thy Salvation! that I may, for Myself in particular, see the Felicity of thy Chosen, and rejoice with the Gladness of thy Nation, and glory with thine Inheritance.*

Psalm cvi. 4.

F I N I S.



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